(Is God Is)

by
(Aleshea Harris)

(Based on the play by Aleshea Harris)

NMontazaran@wmeagency.com + mkoenig@wmeagency.com
310.859.4460

PROLOGUE

2 EXT. FOSTER HOME - MORNING 2

The suburbs eleven years ago. Perfectly manicured lawns and blue skies. From behind, two identical twin girls (10) same hair, same dresses, walk in lock step towards a cute house with a porch.

RACINE (V.O.)
Them twins burnin.

A SOCIAL WORKER walks ahead, hurrying them along.

SOCIAL WORKER
Come on, girls.

As the trio approach the porch, the front door opens and a cheery-looking FOSTER MOTHER and FOSTER FATHER appear.

SOCIAL WORKER
Say hi to your new mom and dad.

The twins reach for each other, clasp hands.

RACINE (V.O.)
They been burnin. Don't know how long.

3 EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY 3

The girls later that day sitting on a bench, isolated from other KIDS on the playground. We still only see them from behind for now. A ball rolls near their feet and another KID comes to retrieve it. The KID stops cold upon seeing the twins' faces, shocked and disgusted.

RACINE (V.O.)(CONT'D)
Maybe since forever. Like somethin somebody decided long ago.

Kid bursts out laughing cruelly, then runs away, jeering.

KID 1
Ugly! Man, she uuuuugly!

Other kids join the bandwagon, a few coming in closer for a look at the girls and then dashing away as if they're a pair of monsters.

3 CONTINUED: 3

The girls keep still, clearly hearing but not reacting to the abuse. After a moment the kids scatter and their chatter turns to more mundane playing.

ANAIA (V.O.)
They ain't had no say in it.

After a beat one of the twins, RACINE, breaks away from her sister, ANAIA, to pick up a nearby toy lying on the ground. She drops it in favor of another: a plastic bat.

She goes out of frame. Seconds later, the sound of a sickening *thwack thwack thwack*, the hard plastic of the bat smacking flesh, followed by cries.

ANAIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Just burn and burn.

She comes back into frame, lets the bat drop to the ground and sits beside her sister. They wrap their arms around each other. We can see a smudge of blood on Racine's dress as Kid's cries grow louder and louder.

4 INT./EXT. SOCIAL WORKER'S CAR - EVENING 4

Out in front of the same cute house that very evening, the irritated Social Worker loads the girls into a car, a reversal of the morning's events.

Anaia looks back at the dreamy house retreating through the car's rear window.

EXT. TWINS' APARTMENT BUILDING - EARLY MORNING

As this city feels bleak to Racine and Anaia, its colors reflect as much: cold, muted, grey. Sunrise does little to quell the drabness of their building's facade. Litter and sad greenery.

5 INT. TWINS' APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING 5

A few pieces of second-hand furniture, stacks of books, an overflowing clothing rack and a pair of twin mattresses where the now-grown sisters are sleeping on the floor.

ANAIA (V.O.)
Everywhere they go iss heat.

The twins jolt awake, as if from the same nightmare, in unison.

5 **CONTINUED:** 5

Their faces still aren't visible yet, just a hodgepodge of details: sweaty brows, chests heaving, anxious hands adjusting bonnets.

RACINE
Twin?

ANAIA
Yeah?

RACINE
You good?

ANAIA
Yeah. You?

RACINE
Yeah. Bad dream?

ANAIA
Boogeyman.

RACINE
Yeah. Boogeyman.

Without another word, they make their beds in near-perfect unison.

MINUTES LATER

In a ritual more spiritual than medical, Racine ices raised burn scars on Anaia's skin.

CUT TO:

Now Anaia is applying ice to Racine's scars thoroughly, attentive. We feel the ritual's importance.

6 INT. KITCHEN - MORNING 6

A little while later, they're dressed, inexpensively but stylishly-like they're experts on thrift stores and sales racks.

They eat cereal, old cartoons blaring from an ancient black and white television.

In a convention we'll get used to, Racine speaks <u>for the camera's sake</u> without being heard by anyone but us and without shifting her focus from what she's doing.

6 **CONTINUED:** 6

RACINE
(for camera, eyes glued to cartoons)
They starting to think they burnin for a reason. ‘Cause they sposed to.

7 INT. APT BUILDING HALLWAY - MORNING 7

In lock step, the twins strut past a neighbor in the hall who is startled at the sight of them but tries to play it off. They ignore him, eyes trained ahead.

ANAIA
(for camera)
Like how dogs sposed to bark and stars sposed to shine ‘til they die.

8 EXT. IN FRONT OF APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS 8

We catch our first glimpse of the city they live in, which could be Buffalo, Camden or any other urban area in the Northeast that isn’t a major metropolis. It feels neglected, dismal, uninviting.

They get into their dilapidated BLACK 1968 DODGE CHARGER R/T, Racine on the driver’s side, Anaia on the passenger side NOTE: this is always the case unless otherwise indicated.

INT./EXT. - CAR - CONTINUOUS

Details of the car: a hole in the floor of the car on the passenger side, sun-faded picture of the twins as girls dangling from the rear view, zip-ties holding the bumper together like stitches.

Racine tries to start the car once, twice, finally it comes to life on the third try. <u>And this time they speak while giving their focus to the camera, something else we’ll get used to.</u>

BOTH
(to camera)
Them twins figure they <u>sposed</u> to burn. They was born for it.

9 EXT. DINER PARKING LOT - MINUTES LATER 9

They park their car behind a greasy-looking diner.

10 INT. DINER DINING ROOM - LATE MORNING 10

An hour or so later, Racine is busing a table vigorously to keep up with the breakfast crowd. She's distracted, though, staring longingly at a TABLE OF PRETTY YOUNG WOMEN nearby.

As the group of women get up to leave, one of them knocks her scarf to the ground without realizing it. Racine grabs it, going after her.

RACINE
You dropped this.

The woman turns and smiles at Racine, whose face we now fully see for the first time. Full lips. Proportional nose. She is what most people would consider beautiful.

The woman reaches for her scarf but stops just short of grabbing it, wincing. We see what she sees: Racine's hand, covered in painful-looking burn scars, two of her fingers fused together.

11 INT. DINER KITCHEN - SAME 11

Anaia, up to her elbows in dirty dishes and soapy water, ceases humming to herself and looks up, her intuition tugging at her. This happens a lot between she and Racine when one knows some shit's going down with the other.

12 INT. DINER DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 12

The woman catches herself, working hard to be polite.

WOMAN
Uh...thanks. Thank you.

But Racine has seen the familiar disgust in her eyes.

INT. DINER KITCHEN - SAME

Anaia dries her hands, speaks to herself for our benefit.

ANAIA
(under her breath)
Racine is the rough one.

INT. DINER DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Racine makes a split second decision to let the scarf fall to the floor just as the woman is about to grab it, a small act of vengeance.

WOMAN
What...why would you do that?

Moments later, Anaia enters the dining room looking around for her sister. We finally see her face. Her burn scars make her look as if her features melted and then froze into place.

ANAIA
Twin? You good?

Anaia's face elicits stares from a few of the customers. She shrinks before their gaze, lowering her head, hiding.

ANAIA
(for camera)
Lookin like she look, Anaia don't get to be mean.

RACINE
(for camera)
Racine does, though. She got both their mean.

The Pretty Young Woman is now staring in terror at Anaia. Racine blocks her view, flicking the woman's hair.

RACINE (CONT'D)
Whatchyou lookin at pretty girl? Huh? Huh?

YOUNG WOMAN
Hey. Don't do that!

RACINE
Don't do what? Huh? What I'm doing but helping you keep the hair out of your eyes.

YOUNG WOMAN
Stop.

RACINE
You so pretty. Wanna make sure everybody can see your lil face.

The Young Woman flees the diner. Racine and Anaia exchange a look, then Racine heads to the back...

13 INT. DINER, BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS 13

...And bursts into the bathroom, washing her hands at the sink like she's trying to wash off what just happened. Anaia follows suit, the pair wash their hands in silence.

The vast chasm dictated by their difference of appearance is illuminated in the bathroom mirror. They stand side by side, two very different halves of the same coin.

RACINE
I don't like how she looked at us.

ANAIA
Can't control how folks look, Twin. We need this job.

The bathroom door bursts open and their BOSS (40s) glares at them.

RACINE
What?

14 INT. DINER BOSS'S OFFICE - MINUTES LATER 14

The twins barely listen to a tongue lashing from their boss. He speaks mostly to Racine, his eyes avoiding Anaia at all costs. Anaia hums softly to herself, lost in her thoughts.

BOSS
...You begged me for this job and I gave it to you on one condition. You in the front and she stays in the back and no trouble. That's the deal we made, isn't it? Isn't it?

Neither twin responds.

BOSS (CONT'D)
This is the third time this month I've had her in my dining room and you making some kinda trouble. If I have to--

CUT TO:

15 INT. TWINS' CAR - EVENING 15

The twins make their way home, music bumping, each in her own world. Anaia turns the music down.

15 CONTINUED: 15

ANAIA
Sorry ‘bout that, Twin.

RACINE
Ain’t your fault.

ANAIA
He gon’ fire us.

RACINE
He was always gon’ fire us. He a lil’ bitch.

Anaia smirks at her sister.

ANAIA
He a big bitch.

They share a look and giggle.

RACINE
He a dick-in-the-negatives ass bitch.

ANAIA
He a breath-smell-like-shit-took-a-shit-in-his-mouth ass bitch.

They crack up.

16 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - EVENING 16

Racine checks the mail as Anaia heads upstairs. One envelope in particular grabs her interest. She tears it open and rapidly scans the letter inside

RACINE
(sotto)
O shit. O shit.

ANAIA
What?

ABRUPT CUT TO:

17 MONTAGE: 17

A magnificent, rapid-fire burst of photos of Black mothers and their children. We begin with mothers holding newborns all the way up to mothers with their toddlers.

17 **CONTINUED:** 17

Some relaxed, some posed, some in color, some B&W, all non-famous, loving mamas.

CUT BACK TO:

18 INT. TWINS' APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 18

Racine is pacing, the letter shaking in her hand, she's so excited.

ANAIA
We got a mama?

RACINE
Eyup! It say right here.

She holds up the letter but Anaia waves it away.

ANAIA
I'm too tired for all this.
I thought she was dead.

RACINE
Well she ain't.

ANAIA
I thought they said she was dead in a fire. Same fire that put these marks on us.

RACINE
Well she ain't.

ANAIA
Well what she want with us now?
Where she been at?

RACINE
You getting all worked up.

CUT TO:

19 INT. APARTMENT LIVING AREA - NIGHT 19

The conversation continues seamlessly, though the context has changed. They're now having dinner. Racine's excitement hasn't quelled, nor has Anaia's dubiousness. Racine holds the letter like it's the holy grail.

ANAIA
Uh old folks' home in the South?

19 CONTINUED: **19**

RACINE
Eyup.

ANAIA
Way in the South?

RACINE
Eyup. Twin?

ANAIA
Uh uh.

RACINE
Uh uh what?

ANAIA
I know what you gon' say--

ANAIA & RACINE
Seem like we got to go to where she at--

ANAIA
See? I knew you was gon' say something stupid--

RACINE
How is that stupid?

ANAIA
'Cause she don't know us and we don't know her.

RACINE
She know our names. She know how to find us. We got to go see her.

ANAIA
Why she ain't come see us in all these years? Asked about us?

RACINE
Only one way to find out. Let's go.

ANAIA
Now?

RACINE
Eyup. Right now 'cause she finna go.

ANAIA
Where she finna go?

19 CONTINUED: (2) 19

RACINE
Die.

ANAIA
Die? She gon' die?

CUT TO:

20 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT 20

They're brushing their teeth and communicate through wordless sounds. Subtitles translate.

RACINE SUBTITLE
Eyup. Says so in the letter.

ANAIA SUBTITLE
Damn. She only wrote to you? She ain't write me?

RACINE SUBTITLE
Ain't but my name on the envelope.

Anaia's face falls.

RACINE SUBTITLE
(quickly)
But she talk about you.

ANAIA SUBTITLE
Why she ain't write me?

Racine keeps brushing but goes to the toilet, pees.

RACINE SUBTITLE
Maybe 'cause she knew you'd be all emotional.

ANAIA SUBTITLE
Me?

RACINE SUBTITLE
Yeah, you. Even though she ain't been around us she prolly got uh intuition about it. Mamas be knowin 'bout stuff like that. She can prolly sense how you be gettin all emotional, all sad-sack-y—

Racine wipes, flushes, rejoins her at the sink. Anaia gargles.

20 CONTINUED: **20**

ANAIA SUBTITLE
I don't be

RACINE SUBTITLE
You do.

Anaia spits.

ANAIA
Don't.

CUT TO:

21 INT. BEDROOM AREA - NIGHT 21

Racine is rubbing ice on Anaia's scars.

RACINE
Do. You cried about that kitten we couldn't get outta the engine that one time. The one that died?

ANAIA
It died 'cause you wasn't patient enough to coax it out.

RACINE
Had to get to work. You cried. 'Member? All emotional.

ANAIA
…chyeahhhhhh I guess thas true. I do be all emotional sometimes—

RACINE
Like a lil punk.

ANAIA
Yeah, yeah, ha ha—

RACINE
Like a lil beetch.

ANAIA
Now you takin it too far.

They switch positions so that Anaia ices Racine's scars.

RACINE
But forreal though, Twin, we need to go.

21 CONTINUED: 21

ANAIA
I got stuff to do. I gotta meet up with Ellis and tell him about something-

RACINE
Ellis who? O. Him.

ANAIA

We sposed to meet up.

RACINE
Here we go again ‘bout that man she met online. What you gotta meet up with him for?

ANAIA
We need to talk about the future.

RACINE
(to camera)
‘Cine bite her tongue.
(to Anaia)
Ain’t you told me he don’t like for you to look at him while y’all doin it?

ANAIA
I let him get it from behind.

Racine is incredulous.

RACINE
Twin.

ANAIA
If I look at him I might start to catch feelins. Ain’t tryna catch feelins.

RACINE
Twin.

ANAIA
He happy. I’m happy. We good.

RACINE
<u>TWIN!?</u>

21 CONTINUED: (2) 21

ANAIA
Ain't got men falling all over me like you, 'Cine. Some of us got to make do.

Racine has no argument.

CUT TO:

22 LATER 22

The twins are now in bed in the dark. Racine clicks the lamp on.

RACINE
'Naia, if we don't go now, we might not get another chance. She on her deathbed.

Beat.

RACINE (CONT'D)
(sotto, disappointed)
Ol' scary ass beetch--

Anaia clicks the lamp off.

ABRUPT CUT TO:

23 INT. MOTEL, ROOM - THE FOLLOWING NIGHT 23

Anaia clicks the light on in a cheap motel room. She's sitting on the bed in a negligee, waiting.

CUT TO:

Later. She's still waiting. She eyes the hotel phone's message light. Nothing.

CUT TO:

24 INT. MOTEL, BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS 24

Hours have passed. She looks at herself in a mirror. Defeated. A soft knock at the door. Anaia rushes to answer.

25 INT. MOTEL, ROOM - CONTINUOUS 25

She swings the door open and there stands Racine, like she knew her sister was in distress. Anaia turns, humiliated and gets into bed, under the covers. Racine joins her without a word, wrapping her arms around her sibling.

CLOSE UP on Racine's mouth whispering into Anaia's ear...

RACINE
'Naia realized she could either stay in bed sad about some man...or she could get up and go meet her mutha.fuckin.destiny.

Anaia cannot help it. A smile finds its way to her lips.

RACINE
Got your suitcase in the car. Don't worry. You gon' be cute.

Anaia's smile gets bigger.

ANAIA
I hate you beetch.

ABRUPT CUT TO:

THE LETTER THEY RECEIVED APPEARS ON SCREEN

Rapidly word by word, as though being written frantically before our eyes. It should happen a little too quickly to actually be read:

Dear Racine,

This is your mother. I am not dead but I am near Death's doorstep. I hope you and your sister will come see me at Folsom Rest Home For the Weary in Oscarville, Mississippi.

Love,

Ruby

26 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAWN 26

In the early morning light, the twins' car rides down the highway at top speed. Their world is opening up, getting bigger and brighter, like someone turned the volume up on every sound, every color.

27 INT./EXT. CAR - CONTINUOUS 27

Racine plays aggressive music, singing along. Anaia is reading the letter closely.

28 EXT. CAR - DAY - MONTAGE 28

They've stopped the car beneath a sign that says, "Welcome to Virginia." Racine twerks for the benefit of Anaia's disposable camera. Then Anaia does the same.

This happens at three other state signs, perhaps Tennessee, Alabama and finally, Mississippi.

29 INT/EXT. CAR - EARLY MORNING 29

Three days of driving and some of the road trip novelty has worn off. The radio is quiet and an air of seriousness has crept in. Racine pulls into a rest area and shakes Anaia awake.

RACINE
Twin? We almost there.

She puts the car in park and digs into a suitcase in the trunk, selecting an outfit to wear. Anaia follows, groggy.

RACINE
We need to look good since this kinda like our first and last time seein' her, don't you think?

Racine changes clothes, pulling on a very good knock off of a designer dress she packed special.

ANAIA
You don't never wear dresses. You be on that boho-I'm-so-pretty-I-ain't-gotta-try shit.

RACINE
Yeah, but this Mama we talkin 'bout.

Anaia selects a dress and follows suit.

LATER

They're fully dressed, looking at their reflections in the side of the car/windows. Racine applies lipstick.

29 CONTINUED: 29

ANAIA
That lipstick real red. Red like how it feel to know she comin' and goin'.

RACINE
Eyup.

They turn and face each other, using one another as a mirror.

BOTH
You look good. Thanks. Think she gon' like it? Yeah. Yeah.

30 EXT. HOSPICE - LATE MORNING 30

The twins stand on the sidewalk in front of the hospice, a bit like Dorothy standing before The Great Oz. In their fancy dresses and heels, they're incongruous with the slow, country feel of the cars and people on the sidewalks around them.

Anaia looks afraid. Racine looks like she's about to meet her destiny.

RACINE
We in it. This it.

She takes the envelope from her bra, reading.

RACINE
Folsom Rest Home for the Weary.

ANAIA
My mascara runnin?

RACINE
A little.

ANAIA
Iss hot.

RACINE
Yeah. We in the Dirty. Stay hot.

ANAIA
You ready?

RACINE
To see God?

30 CONTINUED: **30**

ANAIA
God?

RACINE
She made us, didn't she?

ANAIA
You gon get struck down.

31 INT. HOSPICE HALLWAY - DAY 31

Racine and Anaia outside of a private room. A sign written in a shaky hand on the door reads, "Racine and Anya"

ANAIA
(whisper)
My name ain't spelt right.

Racine gives her a "shut up" look. Deep breaths from both. The door opens on its own as if by some magic...

32 INT. HOSPICE/RUBY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS 32

The interior of their mother's room feels a bit like another world. The sunlight through the curtains casts a pleasant glow on the tiny space, its TV playing "The Good, The Bad and the Ugly," and its centerpiece: a bed covered in plush quilts.

Adding to the sense of enchantment are the THREE SILENT AIDES surrounding the bed, their fingers moving quickly, furiously as they micro braid the hair of the silhouetted figure, RUBY, who's barely visible beneath the quilts.

RACINE
Good morning. We're--

The braiders' heads and eyes all snap simultaneously on the twins, startling Racine into silence. A raspy voice lets out a cackle and a thin wisp of smoke dances in the air.

RUBY
They good. Them are my girls.

The twins take another timid step forward and Ruby comes more fully into view. Blankets cover her from the chest down. She's completely hidden beneath bandages save for a hole for her mouth and one that allows her hair to flow freely.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED: 32

Between her lips is the source of the smoke: a joint one of the aides brings to her mouth ever so often, helping her to smoke. Anaia and Racine exchange looks.

ANAIA SUBTITLE
I know that ain't no weed.

RACINE SUBTITLE
Prolly for the pain. She progressive.

Though bedridden, Ruby clearly holds a lot of power, the remnant of a beautiful, vibrant woman. She pipes up, as if reading their minds.

RUBY
O, don't mind the smoke. It's for the pain. Glad...y'all could make it. Had the nurse put that sign on the door.

Racine clears her throat, her nerves betraying her.

RACINE
Yes...Mama. We seen it. We really like that sign.

Anaia keeps her eyes downcast.

ANAIA
(sotto)
Eyup.

RUBY
I'm ugly but I don't bite. Come closer so I can feel y'all. Closer...closer...

The twins obey, bringing their faces ever closer to hers until Ruby is able to rub her cheek against their skin.

RUBY (CONT'D)
O yes. My girls.'Member I used to put y'all in opposite clothes so I could tell you apart? Anaia, you was always in tropical colors and Racine, I had you in pastels.

RACINE
Yeah, we remember. Now I like tropical and 'Naia like pastels.

Anaia rolls her eyes. This is <u>absolute</u> bullshit.

32 CONTINUED: (2) 32

RACINE (CONT'D)
So. How you been, Mama?

RUBY
(with a laugh)
O, you know. Dyin.

Racine joins in with the laughter, embarrassingly eager to please.

RACINE
Yeah, yeah. I see you got them tubes in you. I work in a...office and 'Naia work in a bank. She got a boyfriend.

RUBY
She got somethin else, too.

RACINE
Ma'am?

RUBY
Nothin. She quiet.

ANAIA
Hi Mama.

RUBY
I ain't wrote you, 'Naia 'cause you be gettin all emotional. Been that way since you was little. I ain't wanna upset you.

Racine gives Anaia a look of, "I told you so!".

ANAIA
...thank you.
(with attitude)
I guess.

Racine shoots daggers at her sister, who shoots them back, unyielding.

RUBY
I spose you got a right to be mad. I wanted y'all to think I was dead. Who want a Mama thas burnt up all over like uh alligator?

RACINE
How you get burnt up?

(CONTINUED)

32 **CONTINUED: (3)** 32

RUBY
He burnt me up.

RACINE
He who?

Ruby lets out a humorless chuckle that seems to infect the braiders. They shake their heads and finally speak, a soft chorus of incredulity at the tale about to be told.

BRAIDERS
Mm hmm/Wellllll/Chiiiile.

RUBY
Well...it was a regular day...

33 INT. RUBY'S CAR - DAY 33

Eighteen years in the past. YOUNG RUBY (20s) is a tired young mother, driving home. TODDLER ANAIA and TODDLER RACINE (both three years old), not yet scarred, are strapped into their car seats. One is in pastels, the other in tropical colors.

Young Ruby peeks at them in the rearview.

YOUNG RUBY
(for camera)
Regular day.

34 EXT. SHOTGUN HOUSE - DAY 34

She parks in front of a modest shotgun house and gets out, cautiously scanning the street. Satisfied, she lifts the twins from the backseat and takes them inside.

35 INT. RUBY'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 35

The house is humble but clean. Ruby puts the girls down in front of the TV, turns on cartoons, kisses each on the forehead.

36 INT. RUBY'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS 36

She finishes chopping an onion.

YOUNG RUBY
(for camera)
I had just chopped the onions on the counter when--

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: 36

Startled by a sound, she glances into the living room. Nothing. She goes back to slicing.

Again, Ruby senses something and ceases her chopping.

YOUNG RUBY (CONT'D)
And again.

Again, she peeks into the living room. The twins are laughing at the cartoons. Relief. She continues with the chopping until a loud sound from the rear of the house alarms her.

Knife in hand, she heads to the back of the house.

YOUNG RUBY
(for camera)
I'm praying now. I'm praying, please be a branch against the window even though I know there ain't no trees near our windows. So, maybe it's the dog?

She walks quietly down the hall...

37 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT 37

...and into the bathroom, where she flips on the light and glances out the window. Their dog is fine.

Ruby hums to herself, catching a glimpse of her worried, knife-wielding reflection in the mirror. She can't help but laugh.

YOUNG RUBY
(for camera)
Wasn't nothin in there but a bone-tired woman.

She turns and is suddenly standing face to face with MAN. But we don't see his face in its entirety yet, just details of his person: jawline, eyebrows, lip twitch, etc.

Ruby steps back in shocked terror, the knife falling uselessly to the floor.

RUBY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
He just standing there.

He kinda smiles, lifting the bouquet he's holding. Ruby can only stare at her him, handsome, charming and dangerous to anyone who loves or crosses him.

37 CONTINUED: **37**

RUBY (V.O.)(CONT'D)
Face as plain as a slice of wheat bread and talkin 'bout...

We don't hear his voice, just see his lips form the word as Ruby speaks it:

RUBY (V.O.)(CONT'D)
"Hey."

He holds the dozen roses in wrinkled cellophane higher.

RUBY (V.O.)(CONT'D)
Like he ain't just break into my bathroom. Like it wasn't no restraining order.

A SERIES OF VERY RAPID CUTS: We see each time Man hit Ruby, slaps, punches, rough grabs of clothing, etc.

The kaleidoscope of abuse plays swiftly in her mind, like a life flashing before her eyes and WE'RE SUDDENLY BACK IN THE PRESENT with Ruby and Man facing each other in silence.

YOUNG RUBY
Wasn't much to say. I might've reminded him he wasn't sposed to be within a hundred yards of the house or told him I was just fixing dinner.

He reaches up to touch her face softly. She flinches, lets it happen.

YOUNG RUBY
Or let him touch me--

Young Ruby looks at us, aware she might be judged for this moment of sensuality with her abuser. We feel the complexity.

YOUNG RUBY
(to camera)
He do got a tender side. You got to understand. Men like your daddy <u>always</u> got a tender side--

And without warning, he picks her up by the throat and as she struggles and screams, puts her gently in the bathtub.

37 **CONTINUED: (2)** 37

She looks into his face, perversely peaceful as he tightens both hands around her throat until she loses consciousness.

Whistling a tune, he takes the bottle of liquor from his back pocket.

RUBY (V.O.)(CONT'D)
He whistle while he doing it. He good with a melody.

He empties it on her.

CUT TO:

He stands over the bathtub, the twins in his arms.

RUBY (V.O.)(CONT'D)
He tell y'all issa game. "Let's wake mommy up."

He sets the twins down and they stand near the bathtub, peering down at their mother. One touches her face. The other whimpers. Man whistles and strikes a match.

CUT TO:

38 INT. RUBY'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 38

Man's boots move through the living room and out the front door. The sound of screaming follows, but the boots never even so much as hesitate. He whistles as his boots carry him...

39 EXT. RUBY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 39

...out the front door, over the porch and onto the sidewalk. The screams grow quieter with distance.

CUT BACK TO:

40 INT. HOSPICE, RUBY'S ROOM - DAY 40

In the present, the beeping of Ruby's IV is the only sound in the room. The twins are clearly shattered.

RACINE
Damn. Damn, Mama. We was watchin?

40 CONTINUED: 40

RUBY
Them scars you got if from when you tried to get the fire off me.

Anaia sniffs softly, trying to stop her tears. Racine shoots her a look.

RACINE
(quietly)
Don't do it. Not now, Twin-

ANAIA
I'm sick to my stomach, I'm sick.

Anaia rushes from the room.

RACINE
(to Ruby)
She gon be alright. She just. You know.

41 INT. HALLWAYS OUTSIDE RUBY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS 41

Anaia stands with her back against the wall right next to the open door to Ruby's room, fighting the urges to vomit and cry.

42 INT. RUBY'S ROOM - SAME 42

Racine floats closer to her mother.

RUBY
You always been my big girl, Racine.

RACINE
Yeah? What was I like, Mama?

RUBY
Brave and beautiful. You came out first, screamin bloody murder, ready for war.

Racine loves hearing this.

RACINE
Yeah?

RUBY
O yes. My baby girl.

43 INT. HALLWAYS JUST OUTSIDE RUBY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS 43

Anaia peeks into the doorway at her mother and sister. They look like they belong together.

RUBY (CONT'D)
Been a protector since day one.

Her jealousy getting the best of her, Anaia steps into the door.

44 INT. RUBY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS 44

Anaia stands beside Racine.

RUBY
Iss somethin I need to ask y'all to do but I 'on know if y'all gon be up to it.

RACINE
We up to it. We can do anything. We strong. Ain't we, strong,'Naia?

ANAIA
Yeah.

One of the braiders presses the button so that the bed inclines, bringing Ruby closer to her children.

RUBY
I'ma keep this real simple...

Her voice strengthens as she makes her request...

RUBY (CONT'D)
Make your daddy dead. Dead. Dead.

A beat. The twins' eyes meet. The fuck?

RUBY
And everything around him you can destroy, too. I think he got some bitch. Kill his spirit, then the body, like he did me. Make him dead. Real dead. And bring me back some treasures from it.

A long silence.

44 CONTINUED: **44**

RACINE
(simultaneously)
Uh...uhh...uh...see...um...now, see...iss...iss kinda--

ANAIA
(simultaneously)
Uhh...um...we, uh, we...um...thas not somethin--

RACINE
Mama. We respect that you dyin and all, but uhh, this seem a lil crazy--

RUBY
Not as crazy as settin your wife on fire in front of your kids then abandoning them to go off and start another life like nothin ever happened.

RACINE
Okay. You got a point. But you sure you don't wanna just forgive and forget? Die in a peaceful state?

RUBY
Pull this blanket offa me.

One of the braiders obeys. And it’s as if the air has been sucked out of the room.

The twins try not to wince as so many have winced at them: their mother's body is a horrifying terrain of painful-looking burn scar after burn scar. Some of them look as if they're still on fire.

RUBY
No peace 'til I know he gone. You gon do this for your mother? This one thing 'fore I die?

The question hangs in the air. Racine glances at her sister, resolute.

RACINE
We'll do it. Just tell us where to find him.

46 EXT. HOSPICE - DAY 46

Anaia is walking furiously away from the hospice. Racine tries to keep up.

RACINE
'Naia! 'Naia! Where you goin?

Anaia keeps up her pace until her body demands that she stop to puke. Racine checks to make sure no one is watching, giving her sister space.

RACINE
Don't get no throw up on your shoes, Twin.

47 INT/EXT. CAR, PARKED AT A PARK - DAY 47

Twenty minutes later and the twins sit in stony silence in the car. Anaia's eyes are bloodshot. Racine's leg vibrates with impatience. She rolls her eyes.

RACINE
'Cine starting to think Anaia gon' keep up her lil' weak ass silent treatment for the rest of their lives.

Anaia cuts her eyes at her sister. Beat.

RACINE (CONT'D)
She starting to think 'Naia like being perceived as a weak ass beetch. Ain't no other explanation for this kind of behavior when we got shit to do.

Beat.

ANAIA
Meanwhile, 'Naia wondering why 'Cine ain't smart enough to see they being used. She starting to think Racine is content to be a dumb ass, reactive ass beetch who ain't got a brain in her head.

RACINE
O, I'm dumb?

ANAIA
No--

47 CONTINUED: 47

RACINE
I'm dumb?

ANAIA
Ain't said that--

RACINE
If I'm dumb, you dumb. We two dumb bitches--

ANAIA
Alright then. If I'm weak, you weak and we two weak bitches--

BOTH IN UNISON
Since we come from the same cell.

A standoff. A decision without words to get down to the nitty gritty.

ANAIA
She ain't come see us, 'Cine! She ain't come see us in all these years and now this? Like we some attack dogs or something?

RACINE
Come on now, Twin. It ain't like that.

ANAIA
Then what's it like?!

RACINE
You know good and well you woulda shit yourself if she'da come see us when we was kids lookin like that talmbout, "I'm your long lost mama"!

ANAIA
She coulda wrote or somethin.

RACINE
And say what? What could she have said? Or done? She stayed away 'cause she knew it was best for us.

ANAIA
How we know anything she said was real? Them CPS folks ain't never mentioned all that.

47 CONTINUED: (2) **47**

RACINE
They ain’t mentioned nothin. They said she was dead. They lied to us. And how you gon trust them over her. You ain’t felt like she our mama? I sho did.

ANAIA
I don’t know, ‘Cine. I don’t know.

Anaia opens the car door.

RACINE
You--where you goin??

Anaia gets out and walks away swiftly. Racine struggles to crank the car, then follows her at a slow crawl.

RACINE
We ain’t got time for this, ‘Naia!

ANAIA
We ain't killers!

RACINE
I am.

Anaia side-eyes her sister. This some bullshit.

ANAIA
Who you done killt?

RACINE
Don't worry 'bout all that.

(beat)
Think about it this way, 'Naia. He a monster. We talkin 'bout a man who burned his wife alive and left his babies in there to die too. He the one responsible for everything bad that's happened to us. All them foster homes, every time someone called us ugly, the stares, every fight. Imagine what our lives would look like, what *we* would look like if he hadn’t done it.

We can see this having an effect on Anaia. She hears a giggle and snaps her neck to find herself, another version of herself without the scars in the back seat of the car.

(CONTINUED)

47 **CONTINUED: (3)** 47

This other self is cuddling with a very ATTRACTIVE MAN. He looks at the other Anaia like she is everything.

Racine's voice cuts through this fantasy--

RACINE (CONT'D)
We'd be doin a good thing. Not just for Mama but for ourselves. Shit, for society. We finna be heroes.

Anaia gazes at the other self and the man, now sinking into the back seat out of view, as if to make love. We can tells she's thinking about what she's missed out on, anger and sadness brewing. She gets it.

48 EXT. CAR, PARKED AT PARK - DAY 48

An hour later, they're seated on the roof of their car finishing up a meal. A group of children play nearby.

ANAIA
How we gon live with ourselves if we do this?

RACINE
Better. Shit. This purpose. This destiny type shit. This is ours, 'Naia. I can feel it.

ANAIA
I ain't one for no killin.

RACINE
You ain't got to be. I'll do it. I'll do it myself. You ain't even got to watch. But I need you to at least keep me company 'til I get there. You gotta at least come with me.

Anaia mulls this over,

ANAIA
I ain't hurtin nobody.

RACINE
Okay.

ANAIA
I ain't holding nobody down for you to hurt them, nothin.

48 CONTINUED: 48

RACINE
Okay, okay.

Anaia still isn't quite there.

ANAIA
I mean, yeah, she made us, so she is kinda like God, like you said--

RACINE
Eyup, eyup. And we ain't finna leave God hanging, right?

Racine can see the moment Anaia acquiesces on her twin's face.

RACINE
You ready?

ANAIA
...eyup.

RACINE
Good. We gon do this. We gon do it right. First thing we gotta do is go find--

ABRUPT CUT TO:

49 INT. HOSPICE, RUBY'S ROOM - HOURS AGO 49

Ruby, surrounded by her braiders...

RUBY
(to camera)
The lady he took up with after he burnt us up. Lady by the name of Delilah.

CUT TO:

50 EXT. ALEXANDER AVE - DAY 50

The following morning finds the twins traveling down a rural street lined with older looking houses.

RUBY (V.O.)(CONT'D)
She stay in the last house on Alexander Road. Cain't miss it. Last house.

50 CONTINUED: **50**

They approach Ruby's home, garishly-painted with dozens of cars parked out front. In the yard is a life-sized statue of the angel Michael and the Devil wrestling. A sign reads,"Holy House of the Conqueror."

EDDIE (18) stands on the porch, curiously attired in a white tux, down to his white patent leather shoes. He stares them down as the car slows.

ANAIA
This don't feel right. She ain't say it was a church.

Racine puts the car in park.

51 EXT. DELILAH'S HOUSE - DAY 51

Eddie blocks their path as they approach.

RACINE
We lookin for a lady named Delilah. She stay here?

EDDIE
"...Likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control..."

RACINE
What?

ANAIA
(sotto)
Thas a Bible verse, I think.

EDDIE
This is a place of modesty.

Eddie hands them each a scarf.

RACINE
What is that?

ANAIA
(to Racine)
To cover ourselves with.

The twins cover their low-cut, shoulder and midriff-baring outfits without any pushback.

51 **CONTINUED:** 51

EDDIE
She in the middle of it. Y'all late.

He steps aside and the twins finally go in.

52 INT. HOLY TABERNACLE - CONTINUOUS 52

...And are immediately thrust into a church service unlike many have ever seen. The living room of the house filled impossibly with pews and dozens of sweaty worshippers, who we'll call SAINTS, on their feet or standing on the pews themselves.

The Twins stare, agape at this undulating mass of bodies, moving like a storming sea.

Their eyes land on the source of the Saints' attention: DELILAH (40s) dressed all in white with her hand placed none-too-gently on the head of a young boy dressed in the costume of one being baptized.

Delilah is mid-sermon-performance.

DELILAH
...and the spirit of wickedness is leaving this boy already. It knows that the holy waters of the Lord are coming and it is afraid. Can ya feel the rhythm of that fear pulsating in this room, Saints?

The church goers respond with such feverish affirmation that the twins take a step back. The fuck is this place?

DELILAH
Is it in this room, Saints ??!!

More shouts and wails, people moving as if they're all one great, worshipful being at the mercy of Delilah's commandments.

The Devil seems to be jumping from saint to saint. People are jerking and shouting like popcorn popping all over the room:

SAINT 1
There he go!

SAINT 2
O yes, I feel him!

52 **CONTINUED:** 52

SAINT 3
That muthafucka got me!

The twins have no idea what to make of this spectacle. Just as they're about to turn and retreat...

DELILAH
You ain't shit, Devil!

And Delilah dunks the boy in the baptism pool. As he goes under, the parishioners, as if on cue, all fall to the ground and are still save for a few moans.

RACINE
(sotto)
O, hell naw.

They're really leaving this time, only Delilah spots them.

DELILAH
Hello. Seems we have some guests.

The twins freeze, caught.

DELILAH (CONT'D)
Y'all make 'em feel welcome.

And the dozens of folks on the floor, who'd been so engulfed in fervor just moments before turn to look at the twins and smile.

SAINTS
Hello/Welcome/Praise the Lord.

53 INT. HOLY TABERNACLE DINING ROOM - LATER 53

A family dining room straining to accommodate the post-service potluck. Racine and Anaia are sandwiched between two merry Saints. Church folks pass food between themselves, reaching over the twins, who stare at the plates of red meat before them but do not eat.

SAINT 4
Y'all at Faith Tabernacle?

The twins realizes he's speaking to them.

RACINE & ANAIA
No sir.

SAINT 5
New Bethel?

(CONTINUED)

53 **CONTINUED:** 53

RACINE
No ma'am. We ain't at that one either.

The parishioners shoot each other a knowing look. One leans in sweetly...

SAINT 4
Ought to let Mother Delilah baptize you. She'll take and knock them things right off.

Gestures to face, meaning the scars.

SAINT 4 (CONT'D)
Ain't that right, Sister Thelma?

SAINT 5
Mm hmm. Knock 'em right off like she knocked off George's sleep apnea. He ain't got to lay out on the porch no more.

SAINT 4
Mm hmm.

The twins smile their most polite smiles.

54 INT. DELILAH'S HOUSE - LATER 54

Everything's white in Delilah's living area. The plastic-covered couch the twins are sitting on, the carpet where they rest their feet (shoes removed, of course), end tables, hell, even the fake plants are white.

Delilah stands over them, examining them from an uncomfortably close distance. She's gleeful. Eddie is nearby, standing guard.

DELILAH
His girls? You're <u>his</u> girls?

A bit of Delilah's spittle has landed in the Twins' faces. Racine wipes it off but Anaia endures.

ANAIA
Yes, ma'am.

RACINE
Genetically, anyway. We don't know him.

(CONTINUED)

54 **CONTINUED:** 54

DELILAH
(to Eddie)
Eddie. These your half sisters.

The twins make to shake his hand but he is still, judgmental.

EDDIE
(sotto)
Look like they in the world--

DELILAH
(to Eddie)
O, don't be judgmental, son.
(to twins)
Well, I never thought I'd see the day. My goodness. His girls in my place.

Delilah takes a seat in the plastic-covered easy chair.

DELILAH (CONT'D)
Your mama told you I was with him during the trial, huh?

RACINE
(simultaneously)
Mm hm.

ANAIA
(simultaneously)
Yes ma'am.

DELILAH
You must find it strange that I would take up with a man who'd been accused of such things.

RACINE
Well, I mean-

ANAIA
Thas your business.

Anaia shoots Racine a warning look.

ANAIA(CONT'D)
We just wanna know if you can tell us where he's at.

DELILAH
Let me tell you girls, he was so broken it was all he could do to get up in the morning. Came to me a mewling calf but he was a bull time I got through nursing him.

54 CONTINUED: (2) 54

She laughs lustfully. The twins cringe. The ultimate yes-man, Eddie echoes his mother.

EDDIE
Mm hm. Nursing, mm hm.

DELILAH
And then he said he had to go but before he left, he kissed the palm of my hand and promised he'd be back for us and we'd be married.

Beat. Delilah watches the twins as if they're a snack.

RACINE
So...do you know where he got off to?

Delilah catches herself.

DELILAH
You'll forgive me. Your mouth looks just like his. Well, I'm willing to bet he's out West. Was always talkin' 'bout how the desert had somethin special for him.

Anaia shifts in her seat so that the plastic peels away from the back of her thigh.

RACINE
So, Arizona? New Mexico?

DELILAH
O, I don't know. That doesn't sound right. Maybe...California? Thas where people like to go, right? I'm pretty sure he said California. And I know he changed his name, too. Never did figure out what he changed it to. So silly. Who gon up and change their name? I'n 'at that silly? I kept his stuff for him.

She motions for Eddie to open a nearby closet. The twins step up for a closer look and stare in wonderment.

The interior of the closet is a shrine: his shirts, shoes, a brush, record player, address book, etc-mementos of Delilah's obsession laid out meticulously.

The twins lean in--

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED: (3) **54**

EDDIE
Uh uh. Don't touch.

They step back.

DELILAH
If you find him, tell him Delilah kept her promise and that I'm still here in a white dress, beating at the devil and ever faithful to my man.

Her eyes gaze off into the middle distance.

EDDIE
Ever faithful, yes Lord.

DELILAH
(desperate)
Tell him about the church. Tell him Delilah said it's his when he returns.

Embarrassed for Delilah, Anaia looks away to find Eddie staring at her. He doesn't turn away, as most would.

RACINE
How long ago he leave you?

DELILAH
I was still pregnant with Eddie, so, around eighteen years.

Racine cocks her head, incredulous.

RACINE
O, uh uh. You sittin up waiting on a man who left you pregnant?

Anaia touches her sister's arm. Chill.

RACINE (CONT'D)
A man who had just got through setting his wife and kids on fire? A man who ain't tell you where he was going or bothered to write you in eighteen years? Thas the man you waiting on?

Delilah's rage prickles behind her saccharine smile. Eddie steps up in defense.

EDDIE
The bible says--

54 CONTINUED: (4) 54

Delilah holds up a hand, silencing him.

DELILAH
I can see that you are septic with anger and a spirit of devilment.

RACINE
And I can tell he laid that dick right, ‘cause thas the only reason I can think of to be sittin up--

CUT TO:

55 INT./EXT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER 55

The twins hurry into their car, shoes in hand. Eddie and a few parishioners watch them leave. Anaia sucks her teeth, mid rant under her breath.

ANAIA
‘Naia wondering why Racine can’t keep her mouth shut sometimes. Just sometimes. When issa lot at stake. Shit.

Racine chortles, watching Eddie and the others on the porch.

RACINE
Look at ‘em. Thas a damn cult, ‘Naia.

ANAIA
How we gon find out where he at now?

Racine produces a small address book she’d had hidden in her waistband.

ANAIA (CONT'D)
What’s that?

Racine models it like Vanna White, smiling.

RACINE
Look like an address book to me.

ANAIA
From the altar? Twin!

Anaia snatches the book, thumbing through it.

55 CONTINUED: 55

RACINE
Eyup. Grabbed it while ol' girl was running her mouth.

A cry erupts from the house. The twins look to find that Delilah onto the porch in full fury. She yells commands, pointing toward the twins' car.

RACINE (CONT'D)
O damn.

Eddie and a slew of parishioners head toward them. Racine tries to crank the car...but it won't start.

ANAIA
I know the fuck you lyin!

RACINE
Come on, come on, come on...

She tries again and again until, just as Eddie and the others are upon them, it cranks and they speed away. Once at a safe distance, the twins let loose the laughter they've been holding in.

RACINE (CONT'D)
You ain't shit, Devil!

Hoots and cackles.

56 INT./EXT. OSCARVILLE, PHONE BOOTH - THAT EVENING 56

Anaia pulls a dog-eared business card from the address book and holds it up. It features the portrait of a smiling man and bears the words, "Chuck Hall, Attorney: In Your Defense."

ANAIA
See if he in the phone book.

Racine tears through the phone book, searching.

RACINE
Come on...come on...bingo!

She's landed on the page she's looking for. It's the same portrait grinning from a half-page ad.

ANAIA
Call him!

Racine dials the number, listens. Someone picks up on the other end but...silence.

56 CONTINUED: 56

RACINE
Hello?

She can hear faint breathing and then whoever it is hangs up. She sets the receiver down.

ANAIA
What he say?

RACINE
Somebody's there. We gon see wassup tomorrow.

57 INT.EXT. CAR, PARKED AT THE PARK - NIGHT 57

Wee hours of the morning in the same park from before. Racine is asleep in the front seat, Anaia is beside the car, vomiting as quietly as she can. She rinses her mouth and slips back into the car gently. Still, Racine awakens with a start.

RACINE
Twin?

ANAIA
Yeah?

RACINE
Boogeyman?

ANAIA
Huh? No. Go back to sleep.

THE NEXT MORNING

The twins are squatting, peeing in the bushes a few yards away from the car.

RACINE
How we gon kill him, Twin?

ANAIA
We ain't doin it, remember? You doin it. I'm just moral support--

RACINE
You know what I mean. How should it go down? A gun?

ANAIA
A gun? Where you gon get a gun?

57 **CONTINUED:** 57

RACINE
Steal one or something.

CUT TO:

58 INT. CAR, PARKED AT THE PARK - MINUTES LATER 58

The twins are now seated in their car eating honeybuns. As before, the context has changed but the conversation continues, seamlessly.

ANAIA
That ain't no good plan. You should just do it quiet. Poison or somethin.

RACINE
Poison is a punk-ass, bitch-ass way to kill somebody.

ANAIA
At least he'll be dead and it won't be a lotta blood. I don't like blood.

RACINE
God said lotsa blood is okay.

ANAIA
Still.

CUT TO:

59 EXT. PARK - LATER 59

Now they’re brushing their teeth outside. As earlier, they communicate through wordless sounds as subtitles translate.

RACINE SUBTITLE
Hammer?

ANAIA SUBTITLE
Thas sick.

RACINE SUBTITLE
Stone him?

ANAIA SUBTITLE
Nasty.

59 CONTINUED: 59

RACINE SUBTITLE
Drown him?

ANAIA SUBTITLE
Uh uh. Too complicated.

Racine is now gargling from a bottle of water.

RACINE SUBTITLE
Ice pick?

ANAIA SUBTITLE
Eugh.

They both spit.

RACINE
I know! We'll push him off a building!

ANAIA
What if he grab one of us on the way down?

RACINE
What if we knock him out, then push him off the building?

ANAIA
How hard you have to hit someone to knock 'em out? I don't like it.

RACINE
You don't like none of it.

60 INT. EXT. CAR PARKED IN PARK - MORNING 60

The twins return to their car, toothbrushes in hand.

ANAIA
'Cine...we ain't killers.

A FAMILY in a minivan approaches. The DAD in the front seat waves. The twins wave back in unison. The twins can't take their eyes off of the happy-looking family getting out of the van.

RACINE
We come from a man who tried to kill our mama and a mama who wants to kill that man. Iss in the blood.

61 THE SCREEN IS OVERTAKEN BY AN OLD, LOW-BUDGET COMMERCIAL 61

In which CHUCK HALL (40s) walks down a long hallway like a badass.

HALL COMMERCIAL (V.O.)
In trouble?

Hall spins around, pointing finger guns and smiling a huge smile.

HALL COMMERCIAL (V.O.)
Chuck Hall's got <u>your</u> back.

Hall freezes, cheesing. A phone number and logo slam onto the screen. He's earnest but comes off as a bit of a clown.

BACK TO:

62 EXT. HALL'S OFFICE - LATE MORNING 62

The car glides into a stop in front of a storefront window featuring a wall of old TV's playing the commercial on a loop. One or two of the TV's has gone out. An "Open" sign hangs on the door.

63 INT. HALL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 63

The shabby, fluorescent-lit lobby. A sleeper sofa with the stuffing coming out, a few overturned chairs, and an open cereal box on the cement floor.

The only remnants of this former law practice are a receptionist's station with a bell and what seems to be an office with its blinds closed. The twins can hear soft, rhythmic grunts from within, as if someone is making love.

Racine rings the bell. The grunts stop abruptly. Beat.

RACINE
Hello?

Beat.

RACINE (CONT'D)
We're lookin for a Mister Hall.

63 CONTINUED: 63

Very suddenly, the blinds crack open and a single EYE peeks through, then roves like a magic eight ball from one twin to the other. It widens as it takes them in. The twins return the gaze, a moment of suspension.

And as abruptly as it appeared, the blinds are released and the eye is gone. The twins aren't sure what to do.

ANAIA
(sotto)
Should we go?

RACINE
(to Anaia)
Hell naw.
(toward office)
Hellooo. We know you're in there--

The office door bursts open and out comes the SQUATTER (60s) who looks like he hasn't bathed or shaved in far too long. Dressed in tattered slacks, a sweatshirt and a beanie pulled down almost over his eyes, he shuffles toward the couch without even looking at the twins.

RACINE
Where Mister Hall at?

The man merely grunts, settling into the couch and reaching for his cereal.

64 INT. TWINS' CAR - MOMENTS LATER 64

They stare at the commercial on the T.V.'s.

RACINE
Shit. What now?

ANAIA
Feel like we should wait and see if he show up.

RACINE
We ain't got time for all that.

ANAIA
We ain't got no other option, either. If he got this address in the phone book, he got to be close by. They don't just let folks lie in the phone book.

RACINE
Fine.

64 CONTINUED: **64**

LATER

The sun is higher in the sky. The twins watch the front door intently, the “Open” sign staring back at them. Nothing has changed.

LATER

Hours have passed. Racine gets into the car with a bag of fast food. She passes fries to Anaia.

ANAIA
What kinda lawyer don’t get no visitors?

RACINE
Wait-look.

They watch the squatter at the door, looking around carefully to make sure he isn’t being watched. Satisfied, he turns the “Open” sign to “Closed” and steps outside.

His posture is more upright and his eyes more focused than those of the shambling derelict the twins experienced hours before. And he’s wearing Italian leather shoes.

ANAIA
He got on shoes now, Twin.

RACINE
I know.

A tough-looking WOMAN in very high heels approaches Hall and he stubs out his cigarette. They go into the office together, disappearing from the twins’ view.

RACINE
This our chance.

Racine gets out of the car.

ANAIA
Our chance to do what?

Racine searches the ground.

RACINE
To catch him by surprise while they fuckin, ‘Naia.

ANAIA
I don’t wanna go up in there while they doin it, ‘Cine--

64 **CONTINUED: (2)** 64

RACINE
Men get embarrassed real easy. He gon be so worried about saving face in front of ol' girl, he'll tell us anything just to get us to leave--

ANAIA
How do you know he knows anything?

RACINE
His musty ass know something. You seen them shoes? Them the shoes of somebody who know somethin.

Racine takes up a broken piece of cement from a destroyed parking block nearby. She feels the weight of it in her hand.

ANAIA
Whatchou gon do with that?

RACINE
Take your sock off.

Anaia does so, hands it to Racine, who places the piece of cement into the sock and ties off the end. She swings the cement-in-a-sock around a few times, testing its battle readiness.

RACINE
In case he wanna get crazy.

ANAIA
Twin.

Racine ignores her, going into the building. Anaia follows.

65 INT. HALL'S OFFICE, LOBBY - NIGHT 65

The door of the office is cracked open. The twins peek inside.

66 INT. HALL'S - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 66

A small office in disrepair. There's a tiny desk, chair and small refrigerator but also a jump rope and various workout equipment.

The Squatter is in the center of the room facing the woman like some shit is about to go down. He nods.

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED: **66**

The woman rears back and punches him square in the face, followed by a knee to the stomach and a kick in the ass. She counts as she does this.

WOMAN
One...two...three.

67 INT. LOBBY - SAME 67

The twins watch in disbelief.

68 INT. HALL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 68

The squatter squirms as the woman tends to a chipped fingernail, looking a bit bored.

WOMAN
That's all you want today, love?

He hobbles to his feet, takes some bills from his wallet and hands them to her.

WOMAN
You don't want me to smack you or nothin?

He shakes his head.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Aight. See you Thursday.

As she leaves, he retrieves an icepack from the tiny fridge, presses it to his face and weeps. He removes his beanie.

69 INT. HALL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 69

Racine pulls the business card from her pocket, comparing. It's clear that the man they're looking at is the aged, hollowed out version of the man on the card.

They watch him cry.

CUT TO:

70 INT. GYM - DAY 70

Chuck Hall is the eldest in a gaggle of grunting, sweaty men lifting various weights. Very lean but muscular, he pumps barbells, grimacing.

(CONTINUED)

70 **CONTINUED:** 70

The voiceovers are in his voice as it would sound if he could he speak (the same voice we heard in the commercial).

HALL V.O.
Chuck Wendell Hall is a man with no tongue in his head. He lives quiet and keeps his secrets close.

CUT TO:

71 INT. RESTAURANT - DAY 71

Hall in a shabby suit, seated at a table for one, makes short work of a pile of grilled chicken breasts.

HALL V.O.
It is a well-known secret in some circles that he suffered a terrible incident many years ago.

A waiter warily drops off another plate of chicken breasts. He grunts his thanks without looking up.

CUT TO:

72 INT. HALL'S OFFICE - NIGHT 72

He and the woman on another day. He points to his eye, his nose and his crotch. They ready themselves.

HALL (V.O.)
These days Hall's time is spent in ritual penance for his years as a defense attorney, a chapter of his life he considers mostly shameful.

She hits him each place he pointed to, he pays her. She leaves him on the floor, alone.

CUT TO:

73 INT. GYM - NIGHT 73

Hall, who now sports a black eye, limps across the gym to the weights, a few people stare. He ignores them, settling in and pumping weights vigorously.

73 **CONTINUED:** 73

HALL (V.O.)
When he isn't self punishing, he's preparing. For he knows someday, someone will come.

CUT BACK TO:

74 INT. OFFICE - HALL'S OFFICE - EVENING 74

Hall, still weeping, doesn't see the twins sneaking into his office as quietly as they can.

HALL (V.O.)
And when that someone comes, he intends to be ready.

But he must be able to sense them because the moment they step inside, he jumps to his feet, ready for a fight. A brief standoff.

Eyes on them, he grabs a small dry erase board from the desk and scribbles something on it, holding it up for them to see.

HALL'S NOTE
Here to kill me?

RACINE
We'll see.

ANAIA
No.

LATER

Hall now holds the ice pack to his bruised face with one hand while executing near-perfect one-handed push-ups with the other. He grunts softly, the same grunts the twins heard before.

RACINE
So...whassup with ol' girl?

Hall considers whether or not to respond, decides to go for it, abandoning the ice pack to write.

HALL'S NOTE
Penance to cleanse my soul.

ANAIA
For what?

Beat. Hall is ashamed.

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED: 74

RACINE
Guess a defense attorney got a lot to be ashamed about. Out here defending people knowin they bad. Ain't that right?

He refuses to agree but his face says it all.

RACINE (CONT'D)
People like the man we lookin for. He had your card in his address book.

But Hall is already writing a new note, quickly. He holds it up.

HALL'S NOTE
Looking for your father?

RACINE
He ain't none of our daddy.

ANAIA
But he fathered us.

RACINE
How you know?

Hall gestures to his face, meaning their scars.

RACINE
Well? You gon tell us where he at?

Hall shakes his head "no."

RACINE (CONT'D)
Whatchyou mean no?

Hall is writing again.

HALL'S NOTE
Your dad=real bad. You don't want to find.

RACINE
That ain't for you to decide.

Hall writes a lengthier note than the others. Racine digs into her bag, grabbing hold of the sock.

RACINE
He gon tell us something.

74 CONTINUED: (2) 74

ANAIA
You can't force him--

RACINE
Right now he's the only thing standing between us and our mission. And God is finna die.

Hall holds up his note. The twins read it aloud.

RACINE & ANAIA
Go home. To whatever that is to you. Get yourselves into a trade school or a community college. Maybe take up with a sporting young man (ambitious if not handsome) and live out your lives with as little misery as can be managed given your plight.

RACINE
Thas it?

Hall nods to the door, an invitation to leave. Anaia tugs her sister away. Hall reaches for a bottle of tequila in his desk drawer, pours a shot and has just held it up to his lips when WHAM - the glass is knocked out of his hand and onto the floor.

ANAIA
Twin!

Racine stands before Hall giving him the evil eye, sock in hand.

RACINE
This fool gon tell us somethin if I gotta beat it out of him.

She swings the weapon at the bottle, knocking it to the floor. The two stare each other down. After a moment, he scribbles something onto his dry erase board, his eyes never leaving Racine. He holds it up. Anaia reads.

ANAIA
"Come, Death. I am not afraid." O shit, Twin. Thas crazy talk. He crazy. Come on. We got to go.

RACINE
O, you ain't afraid, huh?

Hall comes out from behind the desk.

74 CONTINUED: (3) 74

ANAIA
I don’t like this, Twin.

By now Hall and Racine are in the center of the room facing each other. She swings her weapon, rearing up.

ANAIA (CONT'D)
I don’t like this I don’t like this.

Hall holds out his arms, like the Messiah, a willing sacrifice. Anaia can tell Racine is having trouble getting up the nerve. She reaches for the out...

ANAIA
We could just go, Twin--

RACINE
‘Cine wish ‘Naia would shut up.

Racine moves the sock from one hand to the other, nervous, looking at Hall, his eyes closed in resignation.

Hall’s eyes pop open and she swings reflexively, catching him right in the nose. Racine winces as a terrific spray of blood arcs through the air and Hall stumbles. She holds the sock away from herself, surprised by what she’s done.

RACINE CONT’D
(soft disbelief)
O shit.

The twins are rapt, afraid of what might happen next but Hall merely plugs his nose with gauze and goes to his desk for another glass of tequila. Then he writes something on the dry erase board.

HALL’S NOTE
Go home. You’re welcome.

We see something harden in Anaia’s eyes as Hall turns away from them dismissively.

RACINE
Ol’ weak ass. I should--

Anaia holds her sister back, speaking steadily for Hall’s benefit.

ANAIA
Iss cool, Twin. He know what’s best for us.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

74 **CONTINUED: (4)** 74

ANAIA (CONT'D)
Kinda like how seventh foster daddy knew it'd be good for us to get a summer job at that perfume counter, you 'member?

RACINE
Eyup.

ANAIA
Said it would teach us that folks aren't as shallow as we think. Only wouldn't nobody come near us, 'member? And it was humiliating, 'member?

RACINE
Eyup.

Hall hears them but goes about doing calisthenics.

ANAIA
And seventh foster daddy wasn't the one had to actually <u>feel</u> that humiliation but he knew what was best for us. They call that paternalism, ain't it, Twin?

RACINE
Eyup, eyup. I believe thas what they call it.

ANAIA
Must be nice Mister Hall get to dole out paternalisms. Must be nice he get to do penance by paying somebody to whup his ass. Must be nice he ain't really gotta face the victims of the folks he got off.

It's clear these words are having effect but Hall keeps working out.

ANAIA (CONT'D)
He ain't got no scars like we got, do he, Twin?

RACINE
Don't see none.

Hall abandons exercising and glares at the twins, who return his gaze unflinching.

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED: (5) **74**

He takes up the dry erase board and writes furiously.

HALL (V.O.)
O, but he did have a scar, invisible though it might have been. To tell of it, he had to tell of the Terrible Incident that had taken both his tongue and his will to practice criminal law.

CUT TO:

75 A FLASHBACK: 75

76 INT. YOUNG HALL'S CAR, NEAR DELILAH'S - NIGHT 76

The sound of Hall's marker squeaking against a dry erase board continues throughout the following.

Seventeen years prior a YOUNGER CHUCK HALL drives his car and shares a laugh with his passenger, MAN, whose entire face we still cannot see but we catch more detail than in the prior flashback: more of his features, cufflinks, the pocket square in his suit, etc.

The men joke like old friends but there's no sound. Subtitles in the style of Hall's notes appear onscreen.

HALL'S NOTE SUBTITLE
He smiled a lot. Very white teeth. Took him home after celebrating the verdict.

They embrace and Man gets out of the car, headed toward Delilah's house.

HALL'S NOTE SUBTITLE
Told him I could get him permission to see his twin girls one last time before he left town.

Man turns to face him, thinks this over.

MAN SUBTITLE
He thought it over. "No" he said. "Probably not a good idea. I might have the impulse to finish the job."

Man chuckles. Young Hall's face falls. Did he hear that right?

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED: 76

HALL'S NOTE SUBTITLE
A smile. Very white teeth.

For a breath, Hall and Man regard one another, saying nothing.

HALL'S NOTE SUBTITLE
I tried to smile back but...a man like that can tell.

Man approaches the car. Hall's eyes fill with fear and we...

CUT TO:

77 INT. HALL'S OFFICE - NIGHT 77

The Twins read the last line of Hall's story from the erase the board:

RACINE & ANAIA
"For fear that it would wag, he took my tongue."

Hall is writing again. The twins sit with what he's shared.

ANAIA
Dang. Just ripped it out your mouth?

Hall holds up his note, which Anaia reads.

ANAIA (CONT'D)
"He will be back for the rest of me. I've been preparing to die well."

RACINE
If you tell us where he at, you ain't got to.

Hall raises an eyebrow.

RACINE (CONT'D)
Me and 'Cine gon kill him.

Hall chuckles.

RACINE (CONT'D)
We are.

Her seriousness has some effect. Hall holds up a note.

77 CONTINUED: **77**

HALL'S NOTE
How would you do it?

RACINE
Thas family business.

He stares at Racine for a beat, writes.

HALL'S NOTE
Foolish. But you are the same as him. In the eyes.

He's looking at Racine. She kinda nods, knowing. Anaia knows too. Hall writes furiously.

HALL'S NOTE
Careful. With vengeance, one doesn't know where the blood will land.

The twins nod. Finally satisfied, Hall writes the words they've been waiting for. They read over his shoulder.

ANAIA
California. Up in the hills.

RACINE
Beverly Hills?

Hall shakes his head, writing.

ANAIA
(reads)
Castaic. Just up the 5.

RACINE
What about his name? Delilah said he changed it to somethin new.

Hall hesitates, then abruptly, as if he's afraid he'll change his mind, he uses a pen on his desk to scribble a name on a post-it note, a name only he can see.

He slides it over to them. They read it. Racine shoves the note into her pocket.

RACINE
Let's go.

Anaia gives Hall one last look. He nods. She nods back, following Racine.

78 EXT. HALL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 78

The twins are just getting to their car when a loud whistle sounds from Hall, who has run to the front door. He's writing furiously on his dry erase board. He holds it up.

HALL'S NOTE
Forgot something!

He writes again and jams the board into the air. Whatever it says hits the twins right in the gut. Anaia looks as if she might cave in on herself, whereas Racine narrows her eyes sharp as razors.

HALL'S NOTE
Your father had two more. Boys.
Twins.

79 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY 79

MONTAGE that spans half a day: The twins' car roars across a landscape that gets bigger and brighter as they get further west. We see them whizzing by a produce stand advertising boiled peanuts, crossing a truss bridge somewhere in Louisiana and passing oil pumps in Texas.

80 INT. GAS STATION SOMEWHERE IN TEXAS - AFTERNOON 80

Anaia goes to the register to pay for a bag of ice. As she's rung up, she looks through the window at Racine, pumping gas and mouthing the lyrics to an aggressive song blaring from the car's speaker.

She spots a motorcycle at a pump near theirs. Something about it gives her pause.

81 INT./EXT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER 81

Anaia joins Racine in the car and immediately turns down the radio.

RACINE
What you doing?

She motions to the motorcycle.

ANAIA
Feel like I seen that motorcycle before.

81 CONTINUED: **81**

RACINE
Must be a million motorcycles that look like that.

Racine cranks the music again. Anaia stares at the motorcycle through the sideview mirror as they pull off.

82 INT. TWINS' CAR - LATER 82

Racine is behind the wheel and she is turnt all the way up, dancing and singing along to the song. A sleeping Anaia jerks awake, startled.

She watches her sister embodying the music, frighteningly into it. Disgusted, Anaia reaches over and turns the radio off.

RACINE
Fuck is you doin??

Racine turns the radio on. Anaia turns it off. On. Off. On. Off.

RACINE (CONT'D)
What's wrong witchyou? Driver controls the radio.

ANAIA
You over there actin like you finna go do a drive by.

RACINE
And you acting like you thought this was gon be summer camp. This ain't no road trip. We finna go kill somebody.

ANAIA
I don't like how you been acting.

She turns away from her sister.

RACINE
O uh uh.

Racine jerks the car over to the side of the road, slamming on the brakes.

ANAIA
What are you--

Racine gets in close so that they're nearly nose to nose.

82 CONTINUED: 82

RACINE
You been correcting me and looking at me funny like I'm the monster and I'm sick of it. You got somethin you wanna say?

ANAIA
You enjoyin this shit too much! We finna go kill somebody, Twin!

RACINE
And?

ANAIA
And??

RACINE
Ain't we been killt, Naia??

Beat. Anaia wants to understand but cannot. She turns to get out of the car. Racine stops her.

RACINE (CONT'D)
Ain't we??

ANAIA
How we been killt when we breathin?

RACINE
When you ain't had nobody around to tell you you a person like everybody else, you ain't actually breathin.

ANAIA
'Naia wish Racine would quit talkin crazy.

RACINE
We ain't been *alive* alive 'cause we ain't had no real mama or daddy or cousins or play cousins around to treat us like we human. We been floatin. Furniture. Just been stepped on again and again. And he did that. And I ain't finna feel sad about giving him what's coming to him!

Racine hops out of the car and slams the door. Anaia takes a breath, goes to her sister, offering her a tissue. Racine snatches it without looking at her, drying her eyes.

82 CONTINUED: (2) 82

ANAIA
(sotto)
You so mad, Twin.

RACINE
Ain't you? *I* wanna tell somebody they ugly. *I* wanna step on somethin for once. See what it feel like. Must feel good if everybody else keep doin it.

Anaia grabs a couple ice cubes from the cooler in the car and hands one to her sister. They ice themselves in silence.

RACINE
You ‘member second foster daddy?

ANAIA
Mm hmm. With his doofy ass.

RACINE
‘Member how he used to snap the belt at us?

ANAIA
Wasn’t no us. That was you. ‘Cause you laughed every time he came down the stairs so you always got a whuppin.

Racine chuckles at the memory.

RACINE
Eyup, eyup.

ANAIA
And you used to call for Her. For God. I’d hear you callin for Her from the next room when he was hitting you--

RACINE
For Mama?

ANAIA
Eyup. You’d be cryin out for Her.

RACINE
Thas a lie.

ANAIA
I heard you.

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED: (3) 82

RACINE
You ain't heard me cry. I never cried one time when he was hittin me. Thas why he wouldn't stop. Fuckin doofy bitch ass muthafucka. He the first person I killt.

ANAIA
You ain't killt him. He had a heart attack.

RACINE
He had it 'cause he kept whuppin me. He kept whuppin me 'cause I kept doin stuff to make him whup me 'cause I knew it would kill his pork chop-sammich-every-morning-ass. Doofy bitch.

They crack up.

83 EXT. PARK OR SOMETHING - MIDDAY 83

The next afternoon the sisters are stopped along a stretch of highway in Texas. Anaia is off a bit from the road, peeing. Racine is changing from her shirt into a bikini top.

Anaia notices the sound in the distance first, cocking her head. Racine does soon thereafter. Their eyes meet.

The hum gets louder and its source comes into view: the motorcycle from before speeding up the road coming toward them.

They freeze, somewhere between fight and flight, as it lurches to a stop.

RACINE
Twin.

They scramble into the car, locking the doors as HELMET (what we'll call the rider for now) dismounts the bike and faces them.

For a few seconds this is it: the twins stare at the unmoving figure who seems to stare back. It is creepy as hell.

ANAIA
Go.

Racine winds down her window.

83 CONTINUED: **83**

RACINE
What the fuck you want?

ANAIA
Twin! This is how bitches get killt! Les GO!

Racine peels off. Helmet hops on his bike, as if to follow.

84 EXT. TWINS' CAR - CONTINUOUS 84

The car moves from the highway to a quieter side street and then an even quieter rural road with just a smattering of houses...

85 INT. TWINS' CAR - CONTINUOUS 85

...And slows to a stop beside what looks like an abandoned schoolhouse. The motorcycle is nowhere in sight. Eyes glued to sideview mirrors, they wait.

Before long, the hum of the motorcycle's engine sounds in the distance.

ANAIA
Go, go, go, go!

Racine puts the car in drive and speeds away. Helmet gives chase.

RACINE
Can't get this doggone thing to go no faster.

But she tries, flooring it as Helmet inches closer. They notice that the road ahead turns into a dead end.

ANAIA
Turn around!

RACINE
Ain't no room for all that!

Helmet is almost upon them so Racine goes for it, jerking the car around at such a high rate of speed that it loses control and-WHAM-they hit a tree.

Helmet pulls up as they high-tail it out of the car.

ANAIA
Twin! The school!

(CONTINUED)

85 CONTINUED: 85

They head to the abandoned schoolhouse to find the door locked. A look back. Helmet has dismounted his bike, staring. He reaches into his pack and pulls out a motherfucking hammer. Between the hammer and the helmet, he resembles an age-old warrior-demon.

RACINE
O bitch. O no. O god.

ANAIA
You got that sock?

RACINE
Iss in the car!

Helmet is headed toward them, strolling like he's walking in a park, murmuring softly to himself as he goes.

Desperate, the twins kick down the schoolhouse door, dashing inside.

86 INT. SCHOOLHOUSE - CONTINUOUS 86

No one's been in this place in decades. Dust everywhere. Boarded up windows. No light save for what comes through the door they just kicked down. There are still student desks, eerily in rows, and a teacher's desk where the twins run to hide.

The twins peek from their hiding place, watching in terror as Helmet enters the schoolhouse, smashing desks with his hammer as he goes, still murmuring to himself.

The twins exchange looks, subtitles translate.

RACINE SUBTITLE
On three we gon make a run for it.

ANAIA SUBTITLE
Run where?

RACINE SUBTITLE
Through the window.

ANAIA SUBTITLE
Which window? There's a bunch of--

RACINE SUBTITLE
One, two--

ANAIA SUBTITLE
No, wait! They all boarded up! How we gonna--

86 CONTINUED: 86

RACINE SUBTITLE
THREE!

Racine zips out from under the desk to one of the boarded up windows and Anaia is forced to follow. Helmet spots them immediately, heads their way. Racine tries to punch through the board which is just ridiculous.

ANAIA
This wasn't no good plan, Twin!

RACINE
Just help me pry it loose!

They pry the board desperately as Helmet advances. One corner of it swings loose just as he reaches them. Helmet swings his weapon downward but the twins, as if of one mind, hold the board up as a shield. It cracks. He swings again and again.

RACINE
Go!

Anaia tugs the window open as Racine kicks Helmet swiftly in the chest, throwing him off balance. Anaia climbs through the window, Racine scrambles out after.

87 EXT. SCHOOLHOUSE - CONTINUOUS 87

The twins run wildly in opposite directions with Racine hiding beneath the schoolhouse stairs and Anaia crouching in the overgrown bush of what had been a playground.

Helmet comes down the steps, inches from Racine. He walks away from the steps, searching, very suddenly turning around but Racine has gone.

We can see from ANOTHER ANGLE that Racine is crouched against the church around the corner.

Helmet moves in her direction, his weapon ready. Just as he's about to round the corner, a rock lands a few feet behind him. Then another and another.

Anaia is fifteen yards away in an especially overgrown section of the lot. She tosses another rock that hits Helmet's boot. He runs toward her, full speed.

Anaia's anger gives way to fear and she scuttles away. Helmet leaps, hammer held high, as she crouches, backing into the thicket.

87 CONTINUED: **87**

Just a foot or so away from her, he sails through the air and falls through the earth, with a surprised yelp.

We see from overhead that he's fallen into the mouth of an abandoned well, a ragged twine barrier around it with a sign nearly invisible unless one is looking for it: ABANDONED WELL.

Racine runs toward her sister.

RACINE
Twin? What happened?

ANAIA
A well. I saw it and...

They look down into the darkness twelve feet below the ground at Helmet, dazed but coming to.

88 INT./EXT. WELL - CONTINUOUS 88

Scraped and banged up, he doesn't have room for much movement. He takes off his helmet and...

RACINE
O, shi--

ANAIA
Eddie?

RACINE
Boy, what the hell wrong with you?

Eddie looks up at the twins, eerily blank-faced.

EDDIE
Ain't gon let y'all kill my daddy.

ANAIA
What?

EDDIE
You ain't gon kill him that made me.

He's trying to crawl out of the hole, but without gaining any traction, it is impossible. The twins look at one another, understanding without speaking what they must do.

TIME CUT:

88 CONTINUED: 88

Racine and Anaia have spent the last fifteen minutes covering the well. They place a few large pieces of the broken desks over its mouth, ignoring Eddie’s cold stare.

EDDIE
"The eye that mocks the father will be picked out!"

The very last bit of wood covers the hole so that Eddie is completely hidden.

EDDIE
He gon' kill y'all dead, even if I don't! He a man of might! He is anointed and highly-favored!

RACINE
Someone'll come along eventually and find his homicidal ass.

They leave. Eddie continues to scream.

89 EXT. CAR - MINUTES LATER 89

The twins stuff the last of any snacks or items they might need into their backpacks. Racine grabs the food, Anaia grabs the baby picture from the rearview mirror and they walk away from their totaled car.

90 EXT. SOMEWHERE IN TEXAS - DAY 90

The next day, the sun is punishingly hot, the air dry as bone. The twins’ backpacks weigh heavily on them and their clothes are rumpled from a night sleeping in the elements.

Somewhat delirious from hours of walking in the sun, they trudge down a deserted street that looks like a replica of a town in the 1800s.

RACINE
You ever wanna scrape your scars off and see what’s underneath?

ANAIA
What’s the point of that?

RACINE
I ‘on know. I be wondering what I’d look like.

90 CONTINUED: **90**

ANAIA
It don’t do me no good to wonder. I like my ugly.

RACINE
You ain’t ugly.

ANAIA
I am and I like it. It keeps me safe. Ain’t gotta talk to as many stupid people. Don’t nobody hand me a flyer on a street corner.

RACINE
I ‘on’t like that. Feel like you labeling yourself what other people call you, internalizing that shit. I don’t like that.

ANAIA
(sotto)
Hurts more to lie, Twin.

Racine has no answer.

ANAIA (CONT'D)
What we gonna do about them other twins, Twin?

RACINE
God said to destroy everything around him--

ANAIA
She said we could. She said we could destroy everything around him.

RACINE
Well if they anything like that fool in the well, they ain’t gon give us no choice.

Anaia stops.

ANAIA
They innocent, Twin. They can't help bein his kids.

RACINE
Ain't nobody innocent. They prolly sit up at dinner and laugh about us and God.

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED: (2) 90

ANAIA
No they don't, 'Cine. Stop that. They ain't done nothin to us.

RACINE
Fine.

Racine sees something in the distance.

RACINE (CONT'D)
Look.

It's a snow cone stand between a pair of the old 1800's shops. They approach the smiling proprietor.

PROPRIETOR
What can I get y'all?

RACINE
I'll have cherry.

ANAIA
I'll do green apple.

PROPRIETOR
Comin right up.

The proprietor merrily scoops the ice.

PROPRIETOR
You ladies look hot. Feel free to lean up against the cooler there. Help you cool down.

RACINE
Thanks.

They lean against the cooler, enjoying the cooling relief of it against their skin.

ANAIA
Wait. Twin?

RACINE
Eyup.

ANAIA
This kinda feel too good to be true, don't it?

Racine thinks for a moment.

RACINE
Shit.

91 EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAWN 91

Racine and Anaia jolt awake to find they are actually seated on the floor of a train station with their backs against an air conditioner. They look around, bewildered that it's actually dawn.

TRAIN STATION ANNOUNCEMENT
Six-thirty a.m. train to Phoenix, now boarding.

92 EXT. CALIFORNIA DESERT - DAY 92

Sweeping vistas of golden desert. A train moves through the desert, its tracks taking it swiftly over the arid, prehistoric-looking landscape. A sign announces "WELCOME TO CALIFORNIA."

93 EXT. GAS STATION - THAT NIGHT 93

An antique truck driven by SWEET OLD LADY pulls into a truck stop/gas station where neon lights seem to scream from every direction. The driver leans out of the window and gives a thumbs up and smile. The twins jump out of the bed of the truck.

BOTH
Thank you.

94 INT. GAS STATION - NIGHT 94

Anaia punches the code into one of the truck stop's pay-for-shower doors. The door unlocks.

95 INT. GAS STATION/SHOWER - LATER 95

Cleaner now, the twins take turns doing each other's hair.

96 INT. BUS, (MOVING)- LATE NIGHT 96

Side by side, they're asleep on a bus.

97 EXT. BUS (MOVING), PULLING INTO CASTAIC - DAY 97

Morning has come. The bus stops and the twins are the only ones to get out, finally having arrived in the desert city of Castaic, CA.

97 CONTINUED: **97**

The doors behind them close and the bus veers off.

Racine and Anaia look around at the sleepy, blue-collar hamlet. Against the cerulean sky, a smattering of FAST FOOD RESTAURANTS and GAS STATIONS are the intersection's main offerings. A quieter road flanked by apartment complexes older than the twins are, a trailer park and in the distance, clusters of homes.

Beyond all of this, in every direction, the earth swells into rugged, rolling hills.

A roll of tumbleweed skitters by. Seriously.

RACINE
(sotto)
I know the fuck you lyin--

98 INT. CASTAIC, GAS STATION - DAY 98

The CLERK in a straw cowboy hat tends to a line of CUSTOMERS as the door dings and the twins enter.

When it's their turn, he looks at them, curiously, his eyes lingering on Anaia. Racine slides him the now wrinkled post-it note Hall gave her days ago.

He glances at it. Shrugs.

CLERK
Never heard of him.
(to next in line)
Next!

99 EXT. STREETS OF CASTAIC - DAY 99

MONTAGE: The twins show multiple people the slip of paper, the LADY in the taco truck wrapping a burrito, a TEENAGER skateboarding in a parking lot, a MAN at the Dollar Store, stocking shelves.

Each person goes from curious to guarded and a bit afraid upon reading the name. They clearly know who this is, but no one's saying.

They happen upon a SIGN SPINNER doing his best to entice passersby, of which there are few. Racine approaches.

RACINE
You know this man?

99 CONTINUED: 99

He looks at the paper, recognition flashes in his eyes, but he ain't giving it up. He shakes his head no.

RACINE
Look, I can tell you know him.

The sign spinner ignores her. They twins step away, preparing to cross the street when...

SIGN SPINNER
What do you have with that man? Business or pleasure?

They look at the Sign Spinner. He gives no sign of having spoken, just keeps up his work.

ANAIA
Business.

RACINE
Family kind.

Sign Spinner continues spinning, and without looking at them, surreptitious:

SIGN SPINNER
That seems like the kinda name a man who lives in a yellow house would have.

The twins lean in.

SIGN SPINNER
Yellow house with teal shutters on the highest hill in town. A man with a name like that might live there with his pretty wife and kids and dog.

He moves away from them, his work done. Racine and Anaia shield their eyes, scanning the hills. BAM, there it is.

A yellow house with teal shutters that looks like the hills' offering to the sky, perched as it is. A yellow house with teal shutters that is definitely bigger than any the twins have ever been in.

Anaia vomits. Racine squints at the house, heat rising in her neck.

100 EXT. YELLOW HOUSE - DAY 100

Establishing shots of an architectural marvel of glass and cedar built into the very hills. Gorgeous, drought-friendly landscaping. A private road that leads to the valley community below.

101 INT. YELLOW HOUSE, VARIOUS - SAME 101

A look at the inside: A master bedroom with garish wallpaper, fully carpeted. A couple of teenage boy's bedrooms, one tasteful, bright and full of succulents. The other cavernous, a junior man cave.

102 INT. YELLOW HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - SAME 102

We zero in on three framed photos on the mantle: 1) a woman holding two newborn identical twins. One yawns, one cries.

2) The same twins at three years old, identically dressed, smiling, adorable.

3) And finally side by side school portraits of them as kindergarteners.

RILEY & SCOTCH (V.O.)
Twins.

CUT TO:

103 EXT. BACK YARD - DAY, YEARS AGO 103

A backyard birthday party where the twins, YOUNG RILEY and YOUNG SCOTCH (10) are the center of attention. They blow out candles. Lots of applause and cheers from the guests.

RILEY (V.O.)
Those boy twins in that yellow house have lived lives of comfort.

CUT TO:

104 INT. BOYS' BEDROOM - NIGHT, YEARS AGO 104

The boys, still ten, sit on twin beds in their bedroom listening with wide eyes to the sounds of their parents having sex in the adjacent room. They cover their mouths, giggling.

ABRUPT CUT TO:

105 ANOTHER NIGHT IN THE SAME ROOM 105

The boys are in the same physical positions on their respective beds listening, only this time it's to the sounds of a loud, violent fight.

RILEY (V.O.)
And wonder.

YOUNG SCOTCH joins YOUNG RILEY on his bed and they put their arms around each other.

CUT TO:

106 INT. BOYS' CAR - DAY 106

The present. RILEY (16) sensitive and bookish and SCOTCH (16), equally sensitive but more bacchanalian, are two beautiful boys riding in their car (Riley drives) music bumping. They pass a joint between them.

RILEY (V.O.)
Each acutely aware that some great unspoken Something hangs in the air like a fog they were born into.

Riley suddenly looks to camera, which Scotch doesn't perceive.

RILEY
(to camera)
Each deals with The Something in his own way.

CUT TO:

107 INT. YELLOW HOUSE/HALLWAY - NIGHT 107

A split view of Scotch in his bedroom having sex with a TEENAGE GIRL while Riley listens at the door outside.

107 **CONTINUED:** 107

RILEY
(whispers to camera)
Riley, the eldest by two minutes, became a boy who listens at doors...

CUT TO:

108 EXT. YELLOW HOUSE/POOLSIDE - DAY 108

Partial view ANGIE, who we'll meet later, in a lounge poolside, reading a magazine. Riley approaches.

RILEY
(to camera)
...and navigates simultaneous urges to protect and reject his mother.
(to Angie)
Hey, Mom.

ANGIE
Riley, can you grab me the umbrella? Your father will be upset if I get burnt up in this sun. Could--

Riley sort of rolls his eyes and does a 180, leaving quickly.

RILEY
Homework. Sorry.

Without seeing Angie's face, we can tell she's disappointed.

CUT TO:

109 INT. YELLOW HOUSE/RILEY'S ROOM - DAY 109

Riley twerks and sings along to a song in his headphones. The door swings open, unexpectedly. It's Scotch, who, confused and embarrassed, turns to leave.

RILEY
(for camera)
And whose embrace of matters considered unmasculine keep him close to the knives.

110 INT. Y.H./BATHROOM - MORNING 110

Scotch stands beside MAN, whose face we do not see, in the bathroom mirror, shaving.

SCOTCH
(to camera)
Scotch, on the other hand, learned his father's lessons well...

111 EXT. ROAD SOMEWHERE - NIGHT 111

Scotch is in the midst of a fight with the same TEENAGE GIRL from before. No one else is around. He moves as if to backhand her. She recoils.

He stops himself, disturbed, confused. Looks to camera, ashamed. The girls skitters off. He goes after her.

SCOTCH
I'm so sorry, babe. I didn't mean--

CUT TO:

112 INT. Y.H./SCOTCH'S ROOM - LATE NIGHT 112

Scotch is crouched at his desk writing in a notebook.

SCOTCH
(a secret to camera)
He's learned to record life's confusions in his Secret Book of Words, which he keeps tucked in the midst of his porn collection. If anyone finds it, he'll say it's for school but it's for him. Them words.

CUT BACK TO:

113 EXT. Y.H./DRIVEWAY - DAY 113

In the present, ANGIE (40s) stands in the driveway next to her car, the trunk popped. She is what many people would consider pretty with her silk wrap and perfectly shaped eyebrows.

She frowns as sweat trickles along her hairline, threatening her edges.

113 **CONTINUED:** 113

ANGIE
(for camera)
Their mother, Angie, typically copes with life in the Yellow House by choosing the path of least resistance. But not today.
(to boys)
Boys! Scotch? Riley?

114 INT. Y.H./RILEY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS 114

Riley has headphones over his ears listening at full volume while watering plants.

115 INT. Y.H./SCOTCH'S ROOM - SAME 115

Upstairs in his Scotch pauses writing, having heard his mother. He writes even more vigorously.

116 EXT. YELLOW HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 116

Angie shifts in her espadrilles. Takes a couple more bags out of the trunk.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
(to Scotch & Riley)
I'm not bringing these groceries in by myself and when your father gets back and I tell him...

She gives up, defeated. Deep breath.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
(to camera, whispered, a secret)
It's easier to let others have their way.

CUT TO:

117 INT. SHOP - DAY 117

Angie is in line with a space between herself and the person in front of her. Someone cuts her. We see her think better of saying anything.

117 **CONTINUED:** 117

ANGIE (V.O.)
(to camera, whisper)
Angie would rather let someone cut her in line than offer a gentle corrective.

118 EXT. BACK YARD - DAY 118

Angie at her wedding, stands outside posed for a picture. Man is beside her, the groom, but we do not see his face.

ANGIE (V.O.)
(to camera, whisper)
She married The Man simply because he was the first person to ever ask her.

PHOTOGRAPHER (O.C.)
Angie, you're not smiling.

She smiles a tight smile. Camera flashes.

CUT TO:

119 INT. HOSPITAL - EVENING, YEARS AGO 119

Angie is a new mother, holding her newborn twins in her arms. They're bawling.

ANGIE
(for camera, whisper)
And she'd had her sons because it seemed easier than defying everyone's expectations and saying she didn't want children.

She looks down at them, daunted.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
(for camera, big secret)
Had never wanted children.

CUT BACK TO:

120 EXT. YELLOW HOUSE - DAY 120

And we're back with Angie in the present, who stands resolute beside that open trunk.

(CONTINUED)

120 CONTINUED: 120

ANGIE
(for camera)
But today, with the blackbirds circling above and the sweat on her forehead ruining her makeup, Angie is choosing a new path.

Beat. Angie screams violently, in a voice she's never used.

ANGIE
SCOTCH! RILEY!

121 EXT. RILEY'S ROOM - SAME 121

Riley takes the headphones off, alarmed.

122 INT. SCOTCH'S ROOM - SAME 122

He looks up from his writing, terrified.

123 EXT. YELLOW HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 123

The thud of the boys' feet as they come running brings a small smile to Angie's face. A win.

RILEY
Mom? You okay?

ANGIE
I'm fine.

RILEY
Is Dad back?

ANGIE
No. I imagine he's still on the lake with his buddies hoping to catch a trout.

SCOTCH
Dang. Why'd you scream like that?

But she's already walking into the house, triumphant.

ANGIE
They were out of organic strawberries. Regular will have to do.

123 **CONTINUED:** 123

The boys exchange a look. That was weird.

124 INT. MASTER BDRM - DAY 124

Angie, now dressed in sweats, speaks to her reflection like a soldier willing herself into battle.

ANGIE
Angie...Angie, do it.

MONTAGE:

Angie makes up the king-sized bed, straightens shoes in the walk-in close, vacuums the carpet. Then she cleans the toilets and sink, spraying a yellowish solution.

125 INT. MASTER BATH - LATER 125

Angie has stopped for a bathroom break, squatting to pee. It looks at first like she's peeing into the toilet but she's actually peeing into a funnel atop the bottle of solution. Angie has been cleaning the room with her pee.

126 INT. MASTER BDRM - MINUTES LATER 126

She goes on, merrily spraying the pee on the light fixtures, the closet door handle, the nightstands, the men's shoes in the closet. Angie surveys her handiwork.

ANGIE
Good. Good girl, Angie.

127 EXT. YELLOW HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 127

Racine and Anaia are crouched among the landscaping near the house, watching Riley dance through his bedroom window.

They move along, spying on Scotch as he removes his wave cap to check on the progress of his waves, a thin roach between his fingers. He flicks it out the window and it sails past the twins, nearly hitting them.

Racine & Anaia lean in for a closer look, examining it. They look up. Scotch has lit another joint.

They move on for a look into ANGIE's BEDROOM WINDOW. She's now wearing a silk kimono and carrying a bottle of champagne, gliding throughout the room.

(CONTINUED)

127 CONTINUED: 127

ANAIA
Pretty.

RACINE
(annoyed that it's true)
So?

ANAIA
Just sayin.

RACINE
Don't.

Racine watches Angie. Anaia watches Racine, clocking her sister's brewing emotions.

The rocks in the landscaping catch Racine's attention. Anaia follows as she picks up one, then another, testing them for weight. The third rock is the charm: heavy, jagged and twice the size of her fist.

ANAIA
That for what I think it's for?

Racine doesn't need to answer. They each take a sock off, doubly cocooning their weapon. Without a word, Racine struts down the hill, swinging the sock/rock as she goes.

ANAIA
God gon get her blood, I guess.

She follows.

128 INT. MASTER BATH - DAY 128

Angie removes her kimono. An ugly bite mark, just a few days old, is revealed on her breast. She gets into the tub, pops the nearby bottle of champagne and drinks it before the foam settles, a faraway look in her eyes.

129 INT. MASTER BDRM - LATER 129

Angie somewhat frantically fills a suitcase: clothes, underwear, shoes and finally a MAP, PASSPORT and STACKS OF MONEY. Just as she's about to zip it closed, *KNOCK KNOCK, KNOCK* - OFF SCREEN, a knock at the bedroom door. She freezes, fearful.

RILEY (O.C.)
Mom?

129 **CONTINUED:** 129

Angie's body relaxes.

ANGIE
What is it, Riley? I'm getting dressed.

RILEY (O.C.)
I just made a really, really good arugula salad. I used some of the micro greens. Can I fix you some?

Angie chuckles, shakes her head.

ANGIE
(sotto to self)
Little weirdo
(to Riley)
No, Son. I'm fine. I'll eat out.

130 INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 130

Riley's ear is still against the door.

RILEY
Mom?

ANGIE (O.S.)
Son?

RILEY
I love you.

131 INT. ANGIE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS 131

By this, Angie is moved.

ANGIE
I know it, Baby. I love you, too.

132 INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER 132

Angie lugs the suitcase out of the room and down the steps. Riley sees it, alarm flickering across his face.

ANGIE
Tell your father I went wine tasting with Mrs. Orson.

RILEY
Why do you need a suitcase?

132 CONTINUED: 132

ANGIE
It’s a wine tour, honey. Over the weekend.

133 INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS 133

As Angie rolls the suitcase to the door, Scotch comes running.

SCOTCH
What’s for dinner?

ANGIE
I'll be back Sunday. Keep that back door closed. We aren't cooling the neighborhood.

Angie regards her children. We can tell she's wrestling with something.

SCOTCH
What's going on? Where's dinner?

This is just the fuel she needs. She rolls her eyes and turns on her heel.

ANGIE
Take care.

And she's out the door.

134 INT/EXT. ANGIE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 134

Angie puts on her sunglasses, rolls down the window and gives the house the finger, her arm fully, powerfully extended.

A merry exhalation. She turns on the radio and sings along at the top of her lungs, and drives. As she rounds the corner...

ANGIE
What in the...

...Racine and Anaia are seated smack in the middle of the road.

135 EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS 135

Racine is staring directly at Angie, holding the sock /rock inconspicuously at her side. Anaia looks away, humming to herself.

136 INT./EXT. CAR - CONTINUOUS 136

Angie rolls down the window and leans out.

ANGIE
Hello? Hello? Excuse me?

The twins say nothing. Anaia chances a look at Angie.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
Hi? Can you hear me?

No response.

ANAIA
(sotto)
Ain't you gonna say somethin?

RACINE
She gotta come to us.

They watch Angie remove her sunglasses.

ANGIE
Girls? Can you move, please?

She gestures, shooing them as one would a dog.

ANGIE
Shoo. Shoo.

RACINE
Who this bitch think she shooin?

Angie turns the car off, grabs the keys and opens the car door.

137 EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS 137

The twins watch carefully as Angie steps one heel, then the other onto the asphalt, smooths her dress, closes the door and approaches, smiling.

They stand as she approaches and stops, a safe distance away.

137 CONTINUED: 137

ANGIE
Excuse me, but I’m running a bit late...

Angie's linger over the first the scars, then the anxiety on Anaia's face, and finally twins' worn out clothes and backpacks.

ANGE (CONT'D)
Are you two okay? Is everything alright?

RACINE
We fine. You know us?

ANGIE
Know you? No. Should I?

RACINE
We're his first ones.

ANGIE
Who?

ANAIA
His first kids. We're the ones he had first.

Understanding sweeps over Angie’s face.

ANGIE
Ohhh. Oh wow. I didn’t...this is so unexpected.

Beat. The twins say nothing.

ANGIE
You're alive?

RACINE
We look dead or somethin?

ANGIE
He said...He said you died in some kind of fire accident and He didn't have to pay child support. Are you here for child support?

Nothing from the twins. Angie takes off her pearl necklace, coming closer.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
Real. Japanese. Akoya.

137 CONTINUED: (2) 137

RACINE
Don't nobody want your pearls.

ANGIE
Well, this is what I've got to offer.

Racine glances at the car behind Angie.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
I need the car.

RACINE
You know what our mama's been doin while you been layin up in your big yellow house with them teal shutters?

ANAIA
Our mama been up in a bed wastin away. He burnt up most of her body. She a crisp.

ANGIE
I'm so sorry. That is unfortunate. But I hope you understand that...that...He lied to me--

RACINE
You knew he was lyin.

Angie gives them her "when-they-go-low-we-go-high" smile.

ANGIE
I can assure you, I did not.

RACINE
Yeah, you did.

ANGIE
No, I didn't.

RACINE
'Naia, who this heffa think she foolin? Can't even lie straight.

ANAIA
I don't know, 'Cine. She could be tellin the truth--

Racine begins an almost imperceptible advance on Angie.

137 CONTINUED: (3) 137

RACINE
You was sittin up in a yellow house with teal shutters while foster daddy number three was makin us wash his drawz and make him macaroni outa box and lickin his lips anytime I came in the room with my shoulders showin-

ANAIA
Let's just let her go--

But Racine is beyond listening to her sister.

RACINE
You was sittin up in a blood house, a house he got to put a mask on what he done to us. You ain't ask no questions?

Angie tries to walk back to the car but Racine blocks her.

ANGIE
Please. I've got to get away.

RACINE
We couldn't get away. Gimme them keys.

ANGIE
I...my keys?

RACINE
He never gave us nothin. He gave you a lot. And somma what he gave you shoulda been ours. Gimme them keys.

Angie finds her backbone.

ANGIE
No.

Racine tries to grab the keys from Angie, who resists. They struggle.

RACINE
Gimme them keys, bitch! Let go!

But Angie holds on for dear life.

ANGIE
No! No!

137 **CONTINUED: (4)** 137

Racine finally manages to wrench them free and holds them up, gleefully.

RACINE
Got 'eeem!

Angie. is. furious. And afraid.

RACINE
Look at her, 'Naia. She ain't used to not getting what she wants.

Angie watches them, any pity quickly turning into a deep-seated disdain. She leans in, venomous.

ANGIE
You're going to come and steal from me because of something He did? You...you pair of animals.

ANAIA
We ain't animals. We on a mission. From God.

ANGIE
God?

RACINE
God is our mama.

ANGIE
O, that's right. Your "mama."

The nastiness in Angie's voice, a nastiness the twins are well versed in, halts Racine's glee.

RACINE
I don't like the way you sayin "mama" like that.

ANGIE
Well, I don't like having my property stolen by a couple of thieves!

On "thieves", Angie lunges, but Racine tosses the keys to Anaia. The twins play keep away.

ANGIE
You won't ruin this! I am going to get away!
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

137 **CONTINUED: (5)** 137

ANGIE (CONT'D)
I've earned it-I planned for months-If He comes home and I tell Him the car's been stolen do you know do you know what He'll do?

Anaia watches Angie, sympathetic.

RACINE
Our mama ain't never had a shot like the one you got. Sheeid. You ain't special.

Angie's face contorts with rage and she SPITS directly in Racine's face.

ANGIE
It is not my fault your weak, ghetto trash "Mama" got burned up. She should've left him.

The world changes as if everything in creation knows some shit's 'bout to go down. Racine wipes the spit. The twins' heads are cocked at the same angle.

ANAIA
...uh...umm...

RACINE
Um...excuse me--

ANAIA
Uhhh...see, uhh--

RACINE
I just...um...wayment...

The twins begin to circle Angie, unconsciously in unison, checking in with themselves, each other and Angie about what the fuck they just heard in deranged delight.

ANAIA
Biiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiitch...

RACINE
You spittin? You spittin, bitch--

ANAIA
"Weak"? "Ghetto trashy"?

RACINE
Bitch, where you get all that from?

(CONTINUED)

137 CONTINUED: (6) **137**

ANAIA
This bitch done called God "ghetto trashy"!

Angie has nothing to lose and unfortunately isn't street smart enough to hold her tongue--

ANGIE
Each of us is ultimately responsible for how our lives turn out! If you were educated, you'd understand that--

Racine hits Angie in the face with the sock/rock. The force of it knocks Angie to her knees. She holds her face with one hand. Blood.

RACINE
We educated.

ANAIA
Twin, don't!

RACINE
We educated, bitch! Say it. Say we educated!

ANGIE
Animal!

Racine hits her again. Angie falls face-first into the pavement.

ANAIA
Racine!

In a fury, Racine hits Angie a few times. Anaia hides her face. And Angie, on what could've been her day of escape, dies somewhat undeservedly in the middle of the roadway.

Whimpers from Anaia. Racine looks down at the body, blood splattered on her clothes. She shudders.

RACINE
Shit. O God. Iss all over me.

She paces, trying to get it off, panicked over what's been done.

RACINE
Shit. Shitshitshitshit--

ANAIA
You...you alright Twin?

(CONTINUED)

137 **CONTINUED: (7)** 137

RACINE
Got her blood on me. Iss all on me.

Anaia takes a wipe from Angie's purse and hands it to her sister. A thick silence as Racine wipes herself clean.

ANAIA
You alright--

RACINE
I'm fine.

She doesn't look fine but Anaia knows better than to say anything. She watches her sister regain her breath and focus.

RACINE CONT'D
What you staring at?

Anaia doesn't answer.

RACINE CONT'D
You gon be sick?

ANAIA
I...don't think so.

RACINE
You ain't did nothin', so you cool. Iss all on me. If it come up, we'll just tell the truth. You want them pearls?

ANAIA
God might.

RACINE
God don't want nothin but blood. Let's keep one of her nails. They nice. Manicured.

138 INT. YELLOW HOUSE - SAME 138

Scotch looks down at a huge plate of arugula salad, disgusted. Riley sits opposite him, eating his own salad like it's the most delicious meal he's had in a while.

SCOTCH
I really hate you, man.

Riley shrugs, eats. Scotch broaches the elephant in the room.

(CONTINUED)

138 CONTINUED: 138

SCOTCH CONT'D
Where do you think she really went?

RILEY
Don't know. Mexico?

Beat.

SCOTCH
How far do you think she'll get this time before Dad finds her?

Riley shrugs solemnly. An unspoken breath of sadness passes between them. Scotch shakes off his discomfort, going to the fridge and shoving a few slices of ham into his mouth.

The doorbell rings.

SCOTCH
Looks like Mom wised up.

139 EXT./INT. Y.H. FOYER - CONTINUOUS 139

The front door opens and Scotch finds himself staring at Racine and Anaia. They seem familiar but he can't place them.

SCOTCH
I know you?

RACINE ANAIA
No. Kind of.

Riley calls from the kitchen.

RILEY (O.C.)
Who is it?

SCOTCH
Wait. Wait. Our birthday isn't for a couple of weeks but...

Riley comes to the door.

RILEY
Who's this?

RACINE
I'm Racine.

139 CONTINUED: 139

ANAIA
Anaia.

For a moment they all take each other in.

ALL
Twins.

Beat.

SCOTCH
O shit. O shit. O shit! I think Dad did this!

RACINE
He definitely did.

SCOTCH
Come on in, girls.

140 INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER 140

Racine and Anaia are seated on a luxurious Italian sectional taking in the room's expensive furniture, the baby pictures of Scotch and Riley, the sense of safety and home. Anaia pets the family dog, who licks her hand.

Throughout, they hear the boys whisper-fighting in the adjacent foyer.

RILEY (O.S.)
What are you doing? You can't just let random people--

SCOTCH (O.S.)
Did you see them? Twins! Stripper twins! Dad had to have hired them!

RILEY (O.S.)
How do we know that?

SCOTCH (O.S.)
It's our birthday.

141 INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS 141

Now we're with the boys in the foyer.

SCOTCH CONT'D
He always surprises us for our birthday.

141 **CONTINUED:** 141

RILEY
Our birthday isn't for two weeks.

SCOTCH
So it's a little early. This has dad written all over it. Remember the twin turtles he got us when we turned nine--

RILEY
I just think something’s off. They don’t look...I mean...

SCOTCH
Shut up.

Scotch peeks into the living room.

SCOTCH (CONT'D)
(to Racine and Anaia)
Go on up, girls. Second door on the left.

Racine and Anaia head upstairs. Scotch is positively giddy.

SCOTCH (CONT'D)
Dad is fucking genius! I'm gonna call Michael and DeShawn. Make this shit a party!

RILEY
This just doesn't seem like something Dad would do. Let me just call him and make sure--

Riley goes toward the kitchen but Scotch blocks his path.

SCOTCH
(imitating)
"Let me just call him..." Do you wake up in the morning and stroke your chin thinking of ways to be the lamest motherfucker ever? Damn!

RILEY
Get out of my way, bruh!

Riley wriggles past Scotch and they both race to...

142 INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS 142

The kitchen, where Scotch manages to place himself between his brother and the phone.

RILEY
What are you doing?

SCOTCH
Let me have this. Shit. Let yourself have it.

RILEY
What if--

SCOTCH
A little fun in this house, Riley!

Scotch's tone gives Riley pause.

A RAPID FIRE MONTAGE of bad times in this house:

Screaming matches, the boys cowering in their rooms, plates broken at the dinner table, etc.

We slam back into the present, Riley considering what his brother is saying.

SCOTCH (CONT'D)
He won't be back until the morning. When was the last time we had fun? In this house, huh?

A look between them. Neither can remember.

RILEY
Fine. But I'm not cleaning up.

Scotch is jubilant.

SCOTCH
That's my fucking bro! My fucking BRO! Twins, twins, stripper twins!

He removes his shirt, whooping and dancing out of the kitchen in celebration. Riley cannot help but smile.

143 INT. MASTER BEDROOM - EVENING 143

Anaia stands near the door as if afraid to touch anything. Racine goes to the closet, rifling through the clothes.

143 CONTINUED: 143

ANAIA
Don’t smell right in here.

RACINE
Not our business.

ANAIA
Seem like an omen. I don't like this I don't like this I don't like this.

RACINE
Just come on.

ANAIA
Naw. You on your own.

RACINE
What?

She goes to Anaia.

RACINE CONT’D
Come on. You wasting time.

Anaia shakes her head.

RACINE
O, you mad ‘cause of that lady? Twin. She looked at us like third foster mama and her friends used to look at us: like we the dirt they sposed to be walkin on. And that spit? Tha fuck was that? She got what she deserved.

ANAIA
(softly)
You ain’t like doin though, did you?

A silence that tells us Anaia is right: Racine didn’t enjoy killing Angie.

ANAIA
We ain’t got to go through with this just ‘cause--

Racine interrupts, forcefully, trying to convince her sister as much as herself.

143 CONTINUED: (2) 143

RACINE
If we don't do this, who gon' do it, 'Naia? Who gon' stand up for God and what all she been through?

Anaia shifts, uncomfortable.

RACINE CONT'D
We the only ones give a fuck! On this whole planet, we the only ones give a fuck about God!

Anaia's face says it all: her sister is right.

RACINE CONT'D
So it don't matter none if it make us feel a little queasy. Don't matter if I get blood in my eye. If we got to be strippers, we finna be strippers. If I got to swing a rock, iss finna get swung. We ain't nothin but the hand of God doing Her bidding.

Anaia is slowly, if not completely, seeing her sister's POV.

RACINE CONT'D
God in between them sheets with her skin flakin off. She prolly ain't been touched by a man since he did it. And what that bitch call Her? "Ghetto trashy"?

Racine gives Anaia a "Girl, you know I'm right" look.

ANAIA
I believe thas what she said.

RACINE
Now errbody know talkin shit about God will get you killt.

ANAIA
Eyup.

RACINE
Struck down.

Anaia is cautiously onboard, nodding.

ANAIA
Eyup, eyup.

(CONTINUED)

143 CONTINUED: (3) **143**

RACINE
And all this shit she got...

Racine makes a sweeping gesture toward the room.

RACINE (CONT'D)
...she kinda stole from us. Far as I'm concerned, that big ol' bed is ours, them nightstands, all them shoes and shit in the closet is ours, 'Naia. This your room, Twin.

Racine rifles through the vanity drawer.

ANAIA
Right. You right.

Anaia touches her sister's arm, serious.

ANAIA (CONT'D)
But you gotta promise me it ain't no more blood but his. You gotta swear to God.

RACINE
Fine. I promise. I swear to God, I swear 'fore God and I put that on everything.

Racine applies lipstick.

ANAIA
If you go back on it, I'm gon walk away, Twin. You on your own.

Racine passes the lipstick to Anaia.

RACINE
Let's just get ready.

Off on the pair of them, side by side, applying war paint.

144 INT. YELLOW HOUSE/FOYER - SAME 144

Teenagers enter the house as loud music blares from inside. Scotch welcomes partygoers. He's dressed in his version of finery: a blazer without a shirt underneath, jeans, J's and sunglasses.

145 INT. YELLOW HOUSE/KITCHEN - SAME 145

A few other kids sip alcoholic drinks and laugh with one another. In contrast, Riley is alone in a corner, drinking kombucha.

146 INT. YELLOW HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 146

A little while later the place has really filled up. Scotch is in the living room along with dozens of other people. Music is deafening, drinks are a-plenty and nearly everyone is dancing. A TEENAGE BOY (16) nudges Scotch.

YOUNG MAN
Ey, where's the strippers?

SCOTCH
Patience, man. Patience.

147 INT. MASTER BEDROOM - SAME 147

Before Angie's vanity, Racine and Anaia, dressed in the sexiest clothes they could find, regard their reflections then turn to face one another.

Racine's eyes linger on Anaia's chest. She raises an eyebrow.

RACINE
Twin? Why your titties lookin so big?

Anaia covers her breasts, unsure, uncomfortable. But Racine knows well what it is.

RACINE (CONT'D)
Twin! I know you not--

CUT TO:

A RAPID MONTAGE of pregnant Black women. The women are with partners, family, friends or alone. We go from women with tiny bumps to really, really pregnant and end on a lone smiling mother cradling a newborn.

148 INT. MASTER BEDROOM - LATER 148

The twins are seated at the vanity now. Racine has a millions questions.

148 CONTINUED: 148

RACINE
Who the daddy? Ol' dude?

ANAIA
Yeah. Iss Ellis.

RACINE
You wasn't gon tell me?

Anaia shrugs.

ANAIA
Don't know what I'mma do.

Racine looks as if she might offer her opinion, but she opts instead to keep her mouth shut. For a moment, they hold eye contact via their reflections.

RACINE
Twin?

ANAIA
Yeah?

RACINE
A baby.

ANAIA
Mm hmm.

A lifetime passes between them. Anaia chuckles.

ANAIA
You 'member that time you bust that boy nose with that bat 'cause he made fun of me? Got us kicked out of Third Foster Mama and Daddy's house?

RACINE
Eyup.

ANAIA
I ain't never thanked you.

RACINE
You ain't got to. You know I'll bust a nose, bite a finger.

Racine throws her arm around her Anaia who rests her head on her sister's shoulder in a posture reminiscent of the earlier scene in the schoolyard.

148 CONTINUED: (2) 148

RACINE (CONT'D)
Hope you know I got you whatever you decide to do, Twin. I'll hold it if you keep it. I'll go witchyou if you wanna get rid of it.

A knock on the door. Racine moves out of the embrace and wipes Anaia's now tear-smudged eye liner.

RACINE
Now you got to fix your face.

ANAIA
Ain't no fixin this.

They laugh at this joke.

149 INT. YELLOW HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 149

Racine and Anaia descend the stairs. Racine gets right into it, bouncing to the beat of the music, making it clap like a pro. Anaia tries to keep up but is clearly uncomfortable.

Riley peeks through the door of the kitchen at the spectacle, shakes his head and returns to the kitchen.

A few in the crowd take notice of Anaia's burn scars. People whisper or laugh. Noting this, Scotch interrupts.

SCOTCH
Wait, wait, wait! Hold up. Let's try this a little different. You, Pretty Girl...

He's pointing to Racine.

SCOTCH (CONT'D)
You face us and keep doing what you're doing. And you...

He's pointing at Anaia.

SCOTCH (CONT'D)
You, Shy Girl, why don't you turn around and let us see you from the back.

The kids laugh and/or register shock at Scotch's boldness. He smirks, enjoying the attention. Racine looks first at Anaia, and then at Scotch, her eyes narrowing.

149 **CONTINUED:** 149

Anaia crosses her arms in front of herself, humiliated.

RACINE
Twin?

Anaia heads into the kitchen.

SCOTCH
Aw, no! Don't be mad! Hey, come back! We gotta get our money's worth.

He turns to Racine.

SCOTCH (CONT'D)
Alright then, gorgeous. Guess you're dancing for two.

RACINE
My sister ain't ugly.

SCOTCH
Yeah, yeah. All God’s children are beautiful or whatever.

150 INT. Y.H./KITCHEN - NIGHT 150

Anaia stands near the door of the kitchen, looking for an escape route. Riley, who had been tidying up, stops upon seeing her.

RILEY
Hi.

ANAIA
I'm gonna be sick.

Riley is momentarily taken aback, but brings the garbage can closer to her. She stands over it until the nausea passes. Then she sits on the floor, her back against a cabinet. Riley is unsure what to do but eager to please.

RILEY
You-you want some water or something?

Anaia nods. He brings her a glass of water and joins her on the floor, trying not to stare.

ANAIA
Thank you.

150 CONTINUED: 150

RILEY
You're welcome.

Beat. Riley fumbles awkwardly for something to say.

RILEY (CONT'D)
So. How long did he pay for?

ANAIA
He who?

RILEY
My dad.

ANAIA
He didn't.

RILEY
I knew it. I knew you weren't strippers. You just don't look--I mean, something didn't add up.

151 INT. YELLOW HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - SAME 151

Racine is dancing as if for her life. She drops it low and whips her hair, giving her audience exactly what they want. Dollar bills rain down. Scotch grinds behind her.

152 INT. YELLOW HOUSE/KITCHEN - SAME 152

Riley can't take his eyes off of Anaia. His eyes travel to her face. She catches him looking and both look away.

RILEY
Sorry--

ANAIA
Why you all up in my space?

He immediately gives her space.

RILEY
My bad.

ANAIA
(sorry)
Iss alright.

RILEY
You're just so different. You sound like you're from somewhere in the South.

152 CONTINUED: **152**

ANAIA
Eyup.

RILEY
My dad is too.

ANAIA
He ever talk about it?

RILEY
Not a lot. When he does it's usually to say something about how fucked up everybody down there is. How they enjoy swimming in their own misery.

Anaia snorts, standing up.

153 INT. YELLOW HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - SAME 153

Scotch is still dancing as close to Racine as he can. Racine whispers something in his ear that makes him a little nervous and a lot excited.

154 INT. YELLOW HOUSE/KITCHEN - SAME 154

Riley watches as Anaia looks at the family photos on the fridge, particularly one of the boys as toddlers. She reaches, stopping just short of touching it.

RILEY
Cute, huh? Well, I was.

ANAIA
How old are y'all?

RILEY
We'll be seventeen in thirteen days.

ANAIA
Why you ain't out there with them?

RILEY
Not my thing.

ANAIA
You ain't got no little girlfriend out there?

RILEY
No.

154 CONTINUED: 154

ANAIA
Cute little kid like you?

RILEY
There's this guy I like.

ANAIA
O. O, my bad.

155 INT. YELLOW HOUSE/HALLWAY - SAME 155

Racine is leading Scotch upstairs. He gives a couple of guys a knowing look. They reach the master bedroom and close the door behind them.

156 INT. YELLOW HOUSE/KITCHEN - SAME 156

Riley cannot help but give in to his deep curiosity.

RILEY
Can I ask you what happened to your face?

Anaia lowers her eyes. For a moment she'd forgotten.

ANAIA
Thas a secret.

RILEY
I'm sorry. I didn't mean to insult you. Sorry. I'll leave you alone.

He turns to go but--

ANAIA
Your brother seem...he seem like he fit in.

RILEY
Yeah. I'm the weirdo hiding out in the kitchen like fuckin Quasimodo.

ANAIA
(carefully)
You ever get to feelin like...like he's happy you're strange 'cause that mean he get to be the normal one? Give him permission to be who he wants to be?

156 CONTINUED: **156**

RILEY
Never really thought about it. I guess so.

157 INT. MASTER BEDROOM - SAME 157

Scotch is blindfolded, seated in the vanity chair jacking off feverishly.

SCOTCH
Yeah...this what you wanna see? You wanna see what this dick can do??

Racine watches, her face as plain as a slice of wheat bread.

RACINE
(flat)
O yah. Show me what that dick can do.

SCOTCH
You want it? You fuckin want it??

Scotch's breath is coming harder, faster as he approaches climax. Racine grips the sock/rock tight.

RACINE
O yah. I want it. You 'on't even know how bad I want it.

158 INT. Y.H. KITCHEN - SAME 158

Comfortable, Anaia lets loose another secret.

ANAIA
It was a fire. Someone set a fire and it crawled onto my face and left me like this.

RILEY
Damn.

ANAIA
I keep askin myself how he coulda done it.

RILEY
You know who did it?

159 INT. Y.H. MASTER BDRM - CONTINUOUS 159

Scotch moans, throws back his head and climaxes.

SCOTCH
O fuck. O my god. O shit.

Coming back to reality, he removes the blindfold, his head still tilted back, to find an upside-down Racine staring down at him. He smiles.

SCOTCH (CONT'D)
Your turn.

CUT TO:

160 INT. Y.H./KITCHEN - SAME 160

Anaia cocks her head, her intuition screaming that some shit has gone down. Riley is alarmed by her expression.

RILEY
What?

161 INT. Y.H. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 161

The kids are dancing and many are drunk.

162 INT. YELLOW HOUSE/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 162

Scotch bursts out of the master bedroom and into the hallway, clutching his throat. A few partygoers spot him and cheer until Scotch coughs up a spray of blood that mists the crowd below.

A confused silence, save for the sick, gurgling sound coming from Scotch's throat. He loses consciousness and falls over the railing onto the crowd below.

Someone screams.

163 INT. YELLOW HOUSE/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS 163

Anaia and Riley turn in the direction of the living room.

RILEY
What was that?

Anaia has some idea but says nothing. She watches Riley run into the living room...

164 INT. YELLOW HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 164

...where the partygoers are now running for their lives. Riley sees his brother lying fetal.

RILEY
Scotch?

He rolls him over. Scotch's mouth is a bloody mess and he's struggling to breathe.

RILEY (CONT'D)
O my god O my god.

Blood spurts from Scotch's mouth as he tries to speak. Riley uses Scotch's shirt to try and stop the blood.

Her dread mounting, Anaia forces herself to enter the living room. She covers her mouth, sickened.

Scotch's shirt is quickly completely soaked with his blood. Riley resorts to trying to stop the bleeding with his hands. Despite the damage to his voice box, Scotch tries to communicate.

RILEY
Shh. Shut up! Don't-don't!

Racine saunters down the stairs, the sock/rock in hand. She's somewhere between defensiveness and triumph.

Scotch's gasping ceases and he dies.

Beat. Riley's face is blank as if he's unable or unwilling to comprehend what's just happened. Suddenly, he giggles. The giggles get louder.

RILEY
Scotch is...Scotch is...my twin is...dead! Scotch, my twin is...

The giggling gives way to disturbing laughter.

RILEY (CONT'D)
Ha Ha hAA HA! He's dead...his blood is...he's gone. My twin...gone. This is...this is funnyyyyy! Ha ha!

The violent laughter takes over and he can scarcely breathe.

RACINE
Look like he done went crazy.

164 CONTINUED: 164

Anaia looks to her sister, all fear and disgust. Racine goes to her, almost pleading.

RACINE (CONT'D)
He called you ugly. I didn't plan to but he called you ugly.

ANAIA
I am, though.

RACINE
If we don't do the other one, he's gonna tell.

ANAIA
What? No!

RACINE
You ain't gotta help. You ain't even gotta watch. Just go in the kitchen--

ANAIA
Twin--

RACINE
He'll talk! He might even blame you for it even though you didn't do anything--

ANAIA
You promised.

Anaia stands between Racine and Riley.

RACINE
You in my way.

ANAIA
You keep doin it. You said we'd just do him and not them but--

RACINE
I'm doin what's best for us--

ANAIA
You a lie.

RACINE
Get the fuck outta my way, Twin--

Racine tries to pass but Anaia shoves her. Both twins are startled by this first.

164 CONTINUED: (2) **164**

RACINE (CONT'D)
(sotto)
Girrrrrrl.

Anaia shoves her sister again.

RACINE (CONT'D)
O, thas what you want? Thas what we doin?

Racine drops the weapon, ready to fight her sister hand to hand.

RACINE (CONT'D)
Les go then. Come on. Square up, bitch.

But Anaia backs away, closer to Riley, who's cowering nearby. Racine laughs at this.

RACINE (CONT'D)
Punk ass. Punk ass bitch. Say it. Say, "I'm a punk ass, weak ass bitch--"

ANAIA
Go!

Anaia grabs Riley by the hand and leads him outside, leaving Racine bewildered.

RACINE
I know the fuck she didn't.

165 EXT. YELLOW HOUSE/POOL AREA - CONTINUOUS 165

Racine exits the house, her eyes scanning the area for her sister and Riley.

RACINE
'Cine wondering how the hell 'Naia gon' choose that lil boy over her own sister!

Racine stalks the pool area.

RACINE (CONT'D)
It ain't right, 'Naia! It ain't. Wait 'til I tell God about this shit.

Without knowing it, Racine moves very close to the bush behind which Anaia and Riley are crouched.

(CONTINUED)

165 CONTINUED: **165**

RACINE (CONT'D)
We ‘posed to stick together!

Riley looks to Anaia with questions in his eyes. She puts her finger to her lips as Racine moves away from them.

The sounds of the world, including that of Racine’s voice fades into the background as Anaia turns to Riley.

ANAIA
(for camera)
There, crouched in them bushes, ‘Naia told him everything. ‘Bout their journey, their mission and their shared parentage.

Riley nods. It’s as if he’s received a ton of information he’s trying to digest quickly.

RILEY
(for camera)
As Riley listened, he felt as if the great fog of his life was clearing. But something more sinister quickly appeared in its place.
(to Anaia, sincerely)
Thank you.

The sounds of the world rush back in and Riley very suddenly grips Anaia’s throat, strangling her. She tries fighting him off to no avail. Riley’s face and comportment have shifted, as if a monster within has been loosed.

Anaia is beginning to lose consciousness when WHAM! Racine bashes Riley with the sock/rock. His hands fall away from Anaia's neck as he collapses.

RACINE
What I tell you? Huh? You wanna save this muthafuckas? I told you--

Riley suddenly gets up and tackles Racine and, though she fights like mad, manages to drag her to the pool.

ANAIA
No! Let her go!

Racine kicks and scratches. Anaia desperately works to pry free her sister to no avail. Riley is too strong and too far gone, his face contorted with fury as he holds Racine’s head under water.

(CONTINUED)

165 CONTINUED: (2) 165

RILEY
Crazy, crazy bitch! You want to come to my house and kill my brother? Bitch! I don't care what He did! Die! Die, you! Die!

Racine is running out of energy and running out of air.

RILEY CONT'D
There you go. Just go. Die. Stupid, filthy, disgusting dog bitch! Die, die, die, die--

Riley suddenly jerks awkwardly, stiffening and falling into the pool, revealing a pair of garden shears stuck in his back.

Her hands covered in his blood, Anaia watches tearfully as Riley struggles to stay afloat in the pool, screaming at her.

RILEY CONT'D
You monkey bitch! You fucking--

He's going under, the water around him turning crimson. Anaia hoists her sister out of the water. Riley continues to struggle.

RILEY CONT'D
Bitch! I'll fucking kill--

Anaia attempts CPR on Racine as Riley loses his battle with the water. Unable to save himself, he gasps and succumbs, suspended in the deep end, the blood pooling.

ANAIA
'Cine? Twin?

Anaia continues with CPR but Racine doesn't regain consciousness.

166 EXT. YELLOW HOUSE/FRONT - MOMENTS LATER 166

Anaia runs from the house looking for help but of course, there aren't any other houses on the private road. She yells down to the more populated canyon below.

ANAIA
Help! Help us!

Her voice echoes in the emptiness and she paces, defeated, panicked, alone.

166 **CONTINUED:** 166

But there's someone watching from just yards away. Eddie, his hammer in hand, approaches Anaia quietly, unseen.

Just as he gets just a few yards from her, a car's engine sounds in the distance. Anaia catches sight of Eddie but barely has any time to register her shock before the car comes into view.

They watch it coming fast. Both half-siblings can sense who's inside.

Anaia gets out of the roadway but Eddie remains, his face lighting up like a kid on Christmas morning.

EDDIE
Father?

He drops the hammer raises his arms, as if about to receive an embrace. But the driver isn't slowing down.

EDDIE
It's me.

ANAIA
Move!

But Eddie's undying hope will not allow him to move. The car careens into him. He sails into the air, falling roughly onto the pavement.

In utter shock, Anaia looks from Eddie to the car just as its door opens and a motherfucking Asics tennis shoe steps out, followed by another.

Anaia gets a good look at the driver and, in a kind of daze, turns and runs into the house.

The unseen wearer of those shoes gets out of the car and closes the door. We do not see his face just yet but we glean his essence from snapshots of the bucket hat on his head, the collar of his polo shirt, his jawline, etc.

167 EXT. YELLOW HOUSE/POOL AREA - CONTINUOUS 167

Anaia shakes Racine.

ANAIA
'Cine! 'Cine!

EXT. YELLOW HOUSE/DRIVEWAY - SAME

167 CONTINUED: 167

We continue to track the driver by way of his Asics. He's now next to Riley's body, examining it. He steps over the body.

168 EXT. YELLOW HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 168

Anaia whispers to Racine, who hasn't moved.

ANAIA (CONT'D)
Twin. Boogeyman. He here.

169 INT. YELLOW HOUSE/FOYER - SAME 169

We hear the wearer of the Asics whistling the same tune from Ruby's flashback as he steps into the foyer. He pauses, then heads toward the kitchen.

170 EXT. YELLOW HOUSE/POOL AREA - CONTINUOUS 170

As quietly as she can, Anaia is gripping the sock/rock while dragging Racine's lifeless body into the...

171 INT. YELLOW HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 171

...living room. She can hear the squeak of the tennis shoes in the kitchen. As quickly and quietly as she can she drags Racine into the...

172 INT. YELLOW HOUSE/DINING ROOM- CONTINUOUS 172

...dining room, where she moves a couple chairs away from the table.

173 INT. YELLOW HOUSE/ KITCHEN - SAME 173

The Asics go to the fridge, opening and closing it and then going to the counter. A drawer is opened and cellophane crinkles. He's making a sandwich.

174 INT. YELLOW HOUSE/DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 174

Anaia is now pulling her sister's body beneath the dining room table.

175 INT. YELLOW HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 175

The Asics are now in the living room. They stop beside Scotch's body, still whistling, then move into...

176 INT. YELLOW HOUSE/DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 176

...the dining room, where Anaia is now lying down beside Racine beneath the table. She watches the tennis shoes slowly make their way around the table until they stop beside the chair nearest to the twins' heads.

The chair is pulled out, and the wearer of the Asics sits in it, now inches from Anaia's face.

Petrified, Anaia listens as the whistling stops. Sounds of someone eating a sandwich and rustling a newspaper. Then suddenly, he pushes his chair back and stands.

MAN
There's a slope behind the house. Pretty easy climb if you're in decent shape. Meet me at the top.

From beneath the table, Anaia watches him move toward the door, then stop.

MAN (CONT'D)
Or you could just stay under that table...and wonder.

He leaves. Anaia crawls out from under the table, grips the sock/rock.

ANAIA
I’m finna go, Twin. I got the sock.

177 EXT. YELLOW HOUSE/HILL - NIGHT 177

Anaia looks to the silhouette of Man atop the hill waiting for her. She climbs.

As she reaches her father, we finally get a full look at him and he looks...like a suburban dad. He’s giving Barack Obama. No menacing tattoos. No scars. His skin is smooth and dark and he’s smiling, a perfectly handsome, charming man in his early 40s.

Anaia does her best to hide her confused surprise, holding the sock/rock up, ready. Man's smile widens.

177 CONTINUED: **177**

MAN
Well, you ain't a complete monster. That's something.

Anaia is fighting the urge to vomit.

MAN (CONT'D)
You want to ask me some questions, I imagine.

Anaia cannot speak.

MAN (CONT'D)
How about if we take turns asking each other questions, one at a time. You first.

ANAIA
I...I...I don't know...

MAN
Yes, you do.

ANAIA
...Why...? Why did you set her on fire?

MAN
Because she wouldn't let me hold her.

He is disarmingly matter of fact.

ANAIA
You set her...wait...that doesn't make sense--

MAN
My turn. Who'd you kill first?

ANAIA
I didn't kill nobody. Not really, 'cept in self-defense. 'Cine was the one--

MAN
Who first?

ANAIA
Your wife.

MAN
Angie?

177 **CONTINUED: (2)** 177

Man is genuinely surprised.

ANAIA
Thas her name? Yeah.

MAN
Wow.

Emboldened by his surprise, Anaia leans in, playing tough as best she can.

ANAIA
Yeah. We put her in the trunk of her own car. My turn. What does that mean, "She wouldn't let me hold her"? You were mad 'cause she didn't want you to touch her so you set her on fire?

MAN
It's more nuanced than that.

ANAIA
That don't strike you as a bit of an overreaction?

MAN
My turn. How'd Angie die?

She raises her weapon, showing him.

ANAIA
Rock in a sock. You don't think you overreacted a lil bit?

MAN
It was a perfectly appropriate response for a young man out of control.

ANAIA
You are really sick.

Man begins a slow saunter in a circle. Without realizing it, Anaia counters him so that the two are orbiting each other throughout the following.

MAN
You ever have a blemish, say, a black head, you want to get rid of? So you squeeze it until it falls off but there's still pus underneath?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

177 **CONTINUED: (3)** 177

MAN (CONT'D)
So you go after the pus with peroxide or whatever you can find, something that'll sting a little so you know it's working? You ever just need to put something out because it has been so catastrophic to your very being?

ANAIA
We was just pus to you? Just something to get rid of?

MAN
I was young. I was young and I'm sorry. The next thing I did was go to the bridge near our house ready to jump so I could join y'all in death.

ANAIA
But you didn't.

MAN
No. And thankfully you all survived.

ANAIA
But you went to court and got off and God is burnt to a crisp and I'm so ugly no one'll look me in my eyes!

Man stays calm.

MAN
I'm sorry about that but you've got to factor in every piece of the puzzle. She could've let me hold her. She could've let me fully stand up in my house. I needed that as a young man. Just to fully stand. I don't expect you to understand.

Anaia raises the sock/rock, preparing to strike.

ANAIA
I got a baby comin. You're the granddad. A baby.

MAN
You're not a killer.

(CONTINUED)

177 CONTINUED: (4) 177

ANAIA
What am I gonna tell the baby 'bout all of this?

MAN
You can tell it you made a few mistakes when you were young. Like I did.

ANAIA
How am I gonna tell it 'bout how you tried to kill us all?

MAN
"Kill us all"? I didn't try to kill you two, just her.

CUT TO:

A FLASHBACK:

178 INT. RUBY'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT 178

As before, the younger version of Man is in the bathroom with three-year old Racine and Anaia, the trio standing over the tub where Ruby is burning.

But this time Ruby’s arms reach out of the tub and grab hold of the twin girls. Young Man tries to grab the girls but their mother’s grip is too strong.

YOUNG MAN
(to camera)
I couldn’t get her to let go.

He flees the bathroom.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)
(to camera)
That’s when I ran out.

CUT TO:

179 EXT. HILL - SAME 179

Anaia is shaking her head at Man in disbelief.

ANAIA
No. No, no, no. She said--

179 CONTINUED: **179**

MAN
I'm telling you, she lied. You've got to give this up, otherwise it's just going to be bad for all time. You'll try to kill me and I'll have no choice but to kill you and in doing so, I'll be killing my first and perhaps only grandchild. I don't want that.

Anaia is faltering, she holds the sock/rock up higher

ANAIA
I promised her I'd bring back a piece of you.

Man goes to her, comfortingly.

MAN
Anaia. You don't have to do this. You can put that down and I'll walk you down the hill. And when the dust settles, you'll bring that baby back and I'll bounce it on my knee and we'll never talk about all the blood on the ground. Come on. We're the only ones left.

Anaia lowers the sock/rock to her side. Man closes the space between them and carefully extends his hand. She eventually takes it.

MAN (CONT'D)
How far along are you?

ANAIA
Eleven weeks, I think.

Man smiles gently, then, quick as lightning, slaps her clean across the face, hard enough to take her to her knees. The warmth in his voice has evaporated.

MAN
That older one, the smart one, he was gonna be somebody. Dog bitch. If you weren't pregnant I'd cut your eyes out and make you eat them.

With that, he kicks her in her side and she tumbles down the hill. We stay with Anaia, dusty and pained, facedown in the dirt. Man whistles, trudging down the hill, stopping near Anaia.

(CONTINUED)

179 CONTINUED: (2) 179

MAN (CONT'D)
Go back to that heaving corpse and tell it, tell it I'd do it all again if I could.

He walks toward the house.

180 INT. YELLOW HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 180

In the living room, Man surveys the party mess and carnage. He goes to the liquor cabinet, pours himself a shot of whiskey and throws it back without flinching.

When he lowers his arm, Anaia stands before him, the sock/rock in the air, ready for battle. She growls, more self-assured than we've ever seen her before.

ANAIA
While you was here whistling and making new babies and trying to forget all the bad things you did, Fourth Foster Mama was laughing at my scars with her friends.

MAN
I warned you.

ANAIA
Somebody got to go today. World can't hold us both.

MAN
Suit yourself.

He moves toward Anaia but the force of someone jumping on his back throws him off balance.

Racine is clinging to him, doing her best to choke him from behind.

MAN
Get off me!

RACINE
Kill him, 'Naia!

Man dodges Anaia's first swing, then bites Racine's arm. Smarting from the bite, Racine releases him and he immediately grabs her by her hair.

Anaia hits him in the back with the sock/rock. Startled, he turns to her. She swings again, almost connecting.

180 CONTINUED: 180

With his free hand, Man grabs Anaia's arm and she drops her weapon.

Now Man is dragging them both across the room. Racine punches him in the scrotum. This does the trick. Man releases them. Anaia, ready, snatches up the sock/rock and follows with a blow to his face.

He falls to the floor and the twins descend upon him immediately, kicking, stomping and hitting him savagely. The fury of all their years rains down upon him.

RACINE
You ain't nothin now!

ANAIA
Yeah! Nothin!

RACINE & ANAIA
You can't hit nobody, can't set nobody on fire, can't marry some prissy bitch, can't go have no new babies, can't hurt God, you nothin!

Man struggles to fight his way up and flees. He stumbles into the walls, moaning and leaving streaks of blood as he goes. The twins follow, enjoying the cat and mouse of it.

181 INT. YELLOW HOUSE/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 181

We follow him through the hallway...

182 INT. YELLOW HOUSE/BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS 182

...into the bathroom, the twins in hot pursuit. He turns to face them, putting his hand up to shield himself. Racine grabs a bottle of rubbing alcohol from the medicine cabinet and douses him with its contents.

MAN
Wait wait wait--

RACINE
He ugly, ain't he, Twin?

ANAIA
Eyup!

They push him and he falls into the tub, taking the shower curtain with him.

182 CONTINUED: 182

Racine drops a match and Man is immediately engulfed in flames. He screams and writhes.

For the second time in their young lives, the twins stand over a tub and watch a parent being consumed by fire. They stare, transfixed by its power to simultaneously bring terror and peace.

Racine keeps her eyes on Man but her voice soft as she addresses her sister...

RACINE
Twin?

ANAIA
Yeah?

RACINE
My bad for what I said before, Twin.

They reach for each other at the same time, holding hands

ANAIA
You good.

But just as they turn away, Man lurches forward and grabs Racine's foot.

RACINE
Get off! Get off me!

The briefest of tug-of-wars between Anaia and Man over Racine. The twins lose. Man pulls Racine closer.

RACINE
'Naia! 'Naia, help get him off!

ANAIA
I...I can't, Twin.

Racine is being engulfed by flames.

RACINE
Twin-help me get him off--

ANAIA
(sotto)
Can't.

RACINE
Twin? 'Naia!

182 **CONTINUED: (2)** 182

Anaia backs out of the bathroom, covering her ears to block out the nightmare of her sister's screams.

By now, the fire has spread throughout the bathroom and out into the hallway. We watch it travel along the stair rails, to the master bedroom, into the living room and kitchen.

Anaia runs out of the house.

183 EXT. YELLOW HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 183

...and sprints down the driveway, where she paces, distraught, watching the fire do its work.

ANAIA
Them twins burnin, them twins burnin...'Cine? Them twins been burnin...'Cine?

184 EXT. CASTAIC, PRIVATE ROAD - DAWN 184

The moon is still setting as Anaia, wearing her backpack, walks down the road, the Yellow House smoldering behind her.

185 EXT. CASTAIC - BUS STOP- MORNING 185

The same place where the twins disembarked just twenty-four hours prior. Anaia boards the bus alone.

186 EXT. DESERT - NEAR SCHOOLHOUSE - AFTERNOON 186

Anaia walks past the schoolhouse. The door they kicked in hangs open. Anaia pauses at the sound of giggling.

She goes back to find Young Racine and Young Anaia, the same age they were in the schoolyard at the beginning, seated at two of the desks inside. They are without fear, free and happy little girls. They don't notice her.

YOUNG RACINE
How you gon' walk when you get big, Twin?

YOUNG ANAIA
I don't know.

YOUNG RACINE
Come on. Yes you do. Do it.

(CONTINUED)

186 **CONTINUED:** 186

Anaia gets up and struts shyly. She poses.

YOUNG RACINE (CONT'D)
Ooo. Get it, Twin. Thas my sister right there!

Anaia's poses get more ridiculous. Racine joins her and both strut, preen and cheer each other on.

YOUNG ANAIA
Thas my sister right, there!

YOUNG RACINE
Thas my sister, thas my twin.

Anaia comes back into view watching this moment of loveliness as if watching her own memory or dream.

Anaia listens to her younger self laugh with the younger version of Racine. She looks away from them in deep consideration.

Beat. Something like resolution in her eyes, she walks away from the dream/memory and into the world.

Off on Man’s bloody hat on the ground, left behind.

Sounds of the girls playing as Anaia traverses the desert.

END